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Liz James
University of Sussex

Some Relevant Dates

313 The Edict of Milan is supposedly issued by Constantine and Licinius, granting toleration to Christianity

324 Constantine I becomes sole emperor of the Roman Empire and announces the foundation of Constantinople on the site of Byzantium

325 First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea proclaims the divinity of Christ

330 On May 11th, Constantinople is inaugurated as capital of the Roman Empire

361–63 The emperor Julian reinstates paganism

410 Rome is sacked by Alaric and the Visigoths

431 The Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesos proclaims Mary as the Mother of God

451 The Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon establishes Orthodox doctrine on the divine and human nature of Christ

455 Rome is sacked by the Vandals

476 The last Roman Emperor of the West, Romulus Augustulus, is deposed by the Ostrogoth, Odoacer

529 The codification of Roman Law under Justinian. The philosophy schools in Athens are closed

532 The Nika Riots in Constantinople lead to large areas of the city being destroyed. Rebuilding starts on the Church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom)

537 Hagia Sophia is dedicated on Christmas Day

550–65 The building of St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai

558 The first dome of Hagia Sophia collapses and is rebuilt

c570 Birth of Mohammed

590–604 Gregory the Great is Pope in Rome

c600 John Klimakos (abbot of Sinai) writes *The Heavenly Ladder*

614 Jerusalem is captured by the Persians

622 The emigration (*hegira*) of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina on July 16th marks the beginning of the Muslim era

626 Constantinople is besieged by the Avars

629 Emperor Herakleios recovers the True Cross from Jerusalem

632 The death of Mohammed

634–42 Arab conquests of Syria, Palestine and Egypt

638 Jerusalem falls to the Arabs

673–78 The Arabs attack Constantinople

691–2 The Council in Trullo

697–98 The last Byzantine possessions in Africa are lost to the Arabs

717–18 The Arabs besiege Constantinople

c730–87 First period of Iconoclasm

751 The Lombards take Ravenna

754 The Iconoclast Council of Hieria declares iconoclasm to be Orthodox doctrine

762 Baghdad is founded

787 The Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (Nicaea II) condemns opposition to icons as heresy

800 Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III

815–43 Second period of Iconoclasm

843 The Triumph of Orthodoxy: Iconoclasm condemned as heresy

860 First Russian attack on Constantinople; it is unsuccessful

863 With victory over the Arabs, the Byzantines start to move East

864 Khan Boris of Bulgaria converts to Christianity

875–902 Byzantine reconquests in Italy and Sicily

962 The first monastery on Mt Athos, the Great Lavra, is founded by St Athanasios

976–1025 Emperor Basil II expands the empire

988 The Russian conversion to Orthodoxy under Vladimir

1054 Schism is declared between the Orthodox and Roman Churches

1061 The Normans conquer Sicily

1071 The Seljuk Turks defeat the Byzantines at the Battle of Mantzikert. The Byzantines also lose southern Italy to the Normans

1096–99 The First Crusade

1099 Jerusalem becomes a Latin kingdom

1147 The first reference to the city of Moscow

1187 Saladin captures Jerusalem

1202–04 The Fourth Crusade

1204 On 4th April, Constantinople is sacked by the armies of the Fourth Crusade

1204–61 The Latin Empire of Constantinople

1204–1340 The Despotate of Epirus

1204–1461 The Empire of Trebizond

1211–1669 The Venetians occupy Crete

1240 The Mongols take Kiev

1261 Constantinople is recaptured by Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Byzantine Empire regains its capital

1291 The fall of Crusader kingdom at Acre

1329 The Turks take control of Asia Minor

1354 The Turks cross into Europe

1399–1402 Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos goes to the West looking for help and support

1439 The Union of the Greek and Latin Churches is agreed at Council of Florence

1453 On 29th May, Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks under Mehmet II and the Byzantine empire comes to an end

List of Byzantine Rulers

324–37 Constantine I (the Great)
337–61 Constantius II
361–3 Julian
363–4 Jovian
364–78 Valens
379–95 Theodosios I (the Great)
395–408 Arkadios
408–50 Theodosios II
450–7 Marcian
457–74 Leo I
474 Leo II
474–5 Zeno and Ariadne
475–6 Basiliskos
476–91 Zeno (again) and Ariadne
491–518 Anastasios I and Ariadne
518–27 Justin I
527–65 Justinian I (the Great)
565–78 Justin II
578–82 Tiberios I Constantine
582–602 Maurice
602–610 Phokas
610–41 Herakleios
641 Constantine II and Heraklonas
641 Heraklonas
641–68 Constans II
668–85 Constantine IV
685–95 Justinian II
695–8 Leontios

698–705 Tiberios II
705–11 Justinian II (again)
711–13 Philippikos
713–15 Anastasios II
715–17 Theodosios III
717–41 Leo III (the Isaurian)
741–75 Constantine V
741–2 Artabasdos
775–80 Leo IV
780–97 Constantine VI (last Isaurian emperor)
797–802 Eirene
802–11 Nikephoros I
811 Staurakios
811–13 Michael I Rhangabe
813–20 Leo V
820–9 Michael II
829–42 Theophilos
842–67 Michael III
866–86 Basil I (the Macedonian)
886–912 Leo VI ('the Wise')
912–13 Alexander
913–59 Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos
920–44 Romanos I Lekapenos
959–63 Romanos II
963–9 Nikephoros II Pocas
969–76 John II Tzimiskes
979–1025 Basil II
1025–28 Constantine VIII
1028–34 Romanos III Argyros and Zoe
1034–41 Michael IV the Paphlagonian and Zoe
1041–2 Michael V Kalaphates
1042 Zoe and Theodora
1042–55 Constantine IX Monomachos and Zoes
1055–6 Theodora (again – the last Macedonian)
1056–7 Michael VI Stratiotikos
1057–9 Isaac I Komnenos
1059–67 Constantine X Doukas
1067 Eudokia Makrembolitissa
1068–71 Romanos IV Diogenes and Eudokia
1071 Eudokia (again)
1071–8 Michael VII Doukas
1078–81 Nikephoros III Botaneiates
1081–1118 Alexios I Komnenos
1118–43 John II Komnenos
1143–80 Manuel I Komnenos

1181–3 Alexios II Komnenos
1183–5 Andronikos I Komnenos
1185–95 Isaac II Angelos
1195–12–3 Alexios III Angelos
1203–4 Isaac II (again) and Alexios IV Angelos
1204 Alexios V Murtzuphlos
1204–22 Theodore I Laskaris (based in Nicaea)
1222–54 John III Doukas Vatatzes (Nicaea)
1254–8 Theodore II Laskaris (Nicaea)
1258–61 John IV Laskaris (Nicaea)
1259–82 Michael VIII Palaiologos
1282–1328 Andronikos II Palaiologos
1328–41 Andronikos III Palaiologos
1341–91 John V Palaiologos
1347–54 John VI Cantacuzenos
1376–9 Andronikos IV Palaiologos
1390 John VII Palaiologos
1391–1425 Manuel II Palaiologos
1425–48 John VIII Palaiologos
1448–53 Constantine XI Palaiologos

Abbreviations

Note: Transliterations and abbreviations follow those of the *ODB*.

AS	*Anatolian Studies*
BMFD	*Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, 5 vols. Thomas, J. P. and Hero, A. C. (eds). 2000. Washington, DC.
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
ByzF	*Byzantinsche Forschungen*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAH XII	*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. XII *The Crisis of Empire A.D. 193–337.* Bowman, A., Garnsey, P., and Cameron, A. M. (eds). 2005. Cambridge.
CAH XIII	*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. XIII *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425.* Cameron, A. M. and Garnsey, P. (eds). 1998. Cambridge.
CAH XIV	*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. XIV *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600.* Cameron, A. M., Ward-Perkins, B., and Whitby, Michael (eds). 2000. Cambridge.
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*
CPG	*Clavis patrum Graecorum*, 5 vols. & suppl. Geerard, M. (ed.). 1974–98. Turnhout.
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
IRAIK	*Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta V Konstantinople*
JGR 1	*Jus Graecoromanum.* vol. 1. Zepos, I. and P. (eds). 1931. Athens.
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
Mansi	*Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio.* Mansi, J. D. (ed.). 1759. Florence.
MGH Ep.	*Monumenta Germaniae historica. Epistolae.* 8 vols. 1887–1939. Berlin.

ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. 3 vols. Kazhdan, A. et al. (eds). 1990. Oxford.
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus completus*, series graeca, Migne, J.-P. (ed.). 1857–66, 1880–1903. Paris.
PLRE	*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*. 3 vols. Jones, A. H. M., Martindale, J. R., and Morris, J. (eds). 1971–92. Cambridge.
PVL	*Povest' vremennykh let*. Adrianova-Peretts V. P. and Likhachev, D. S. (eds). 2nd ed. 1996. St Petersburg.
RÉB	*Revue des Études Byzantins*
TIB	*Tabulae Imperii Byzantini*. 10 vols. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. 1976–2004. Vienna.
TM	*Traveaux et Memoires*

CHAPTER ONE

Byzantium: a Very, Very Short Introduction

Liz James

"The history of the empire is a monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs and women." (Lecky 1869: 13–14). Of course, this is untrue. For a start, the intrigues of women, eunuchs, and priests are perpetually interesting, as any reader of historical fiction will agree; for another thing, there is a great deal more to Byzantium than political history. But Lecky's comment tells us a great deal about what happened when Victorian morality and love of the Greek and Roman worlds came up against the "otherness" of post-Classical, Christian Byzantium, a world empire lasting over a thousand years and covering more than 1,000,000 square kilometers at its greatest extent, from Italy and North Africa to the Black Sea and the Levant (*ODB* vol. 1: 345). Byzantium has struggled in Western Europe beneath the burden of Edward Gibbon and the Enlightenment, condemning it for superstition and rampant (Orthodox) Christianity, and the nineteenth-century, pruriently appalled by what it liked to see as Byzantium's oriental corruption and luxury (Mango 1965). "Byzantine" in English immediately suggests the complicated, inflexible and underhand. The dubious, devious Byzantines themselves are condemned out of hand for their tedious history (all emperors with the same name), lack of literature (where is the Byzantine *Iliad* or *Odyssey*? Tragedy, comedy or poetry?), unrealistic art all looking the same (seen one icon, seen them all), overmastering clericalism (what chance does a theocracy have in any "Age of Reason?"), and general lack of fun. W. B. Yeats has a lot to answer for (*Sailing to Byzantium* 1927; *Byzantium* 1930). Byzantium is both too big and too complicated. Despite its Christian nature and its inheritance of the classical world, it seems too strange, bizarre, and alien in its use of both.

One of the problems for Western Europeans, educated to believe that the Classics and the Renaissance are the two high points of civilization, is that Byzantium is neither. There has been an eagerness to judge in our terms, measuring Byzantium against what "we" believe to have quality, and an unwillingness to understand Byzantium in its own terms, to consider how it used and developed its Greco-Roman heritage into something different but nevertheless worth our attention. This volume is

pro-Byzantium; implicitly and explicitly, contributors engage with the myths and distortions surrounding the study of the empire, arguing for historical diversity, for literature, for art, for God, even for fun. We have sought to engage with Byzantium on its terms; another theme running through the book is that of the culturally determined nature of the evidence we have left to us and how we can try to interpret that in Byzantine terms, considering their definitions and attempting to see what mattered to them (while accepting that this will also form a commentary on our own twenty-first century preconceptions and concerns).

In a bid to manage the complexities of "Byzantium," the time frame employed by this book is the conventional one of 330 to 1453. 330 was the year in which the Roman emperor Constantine I, Constantine the Great, inaugurated the city of Byzantium, which he had previously renamed after himself the "city of Constantine," Constantinople, as the New Rome, the new capital of the Roman Empire. Constantinople remained as capital of the empire until May 29, 1453, when the city fell to the Ottoman Turks and the Byzantine Empire, as a political entity, ceased to exist.

"Byzantine" is the term that we have given to this empire, from the original city, Byzantium. Its inhabitants called themselves "Romans," "Romaioi" in Greek, throughout their history, and they regarded their empire as the seamless continuation of the Roman Empire (Kaldellis 2007). Certainly the structures of administration and government of the Byzantine Empire came from those of the Roman, from the emperor at the top of the bureaucracy, through the different levels of military, judicial, fiscal and ecclesiastical administration (Kaegi 1987). Latin was the original language of the administration, but Constantinople was a Greek city and Greek was the literary language of the empire. Over time, it became the language of government. Further, from the start, the Byzantine Empire was a Christian empire. Constantine had converted to Christianity, perhaps in 312, and he founded his new city with a mixture of Christian and pagan rites (Pohlsander 1996). So, right from its inception, Byzantium was a state that perceived itself as Roman, while being Christian and increasingly employing Greek as its *lingua franca*. These three elements almost encapsulate the empire.

To make the history of Byzantium more manageable, Byzantinists tend to break it down into three stages. The time from the third century down to the sixth or seventh or even eighth centuries is known variously, depending on the perspective of the particular scholar, as the Late Antique or Late Roman (these terms suggest continuity from the Roman period), or Early Christian or Early Byzantine (implying something different from the Roman period). The Middle Byzantine period begins wherever one believes the Early one ends: variously, therefore, from 565 (the death of the emperor Justinian); 610 (the accession of the emperor Heraklios); 717 (the start of the Isaurian dynasty); or 848 (the end of Iconoclasm). It ends in either 1071 (the Battle of Mantzikert, when the Byzantine army was defeated by the Seljuqs and the emperor captured. Ostrogorsky 1968: 344–6) or 1204 (the Sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade). Late Byzantium covers 1204 (or 1261: the recovery of Constantinople from the Latins) to the end of the empire in 1453. After this, one is drawn into the post-Byzantine world and the survival of Byzantine beliefs and culture, particularly visible in the survival and spread of Orthodox Christianity.

Within these very broad partitions, smaller divisions are made, generally based on the ruling imperial dynasty. Hence the early period moves from the family of Constantine to the Theodosian emperors, through the house of Leo I, concluding with the reign of the sixth-century emperor Justinian (A. M. Cameron 1993; Treadgold 1997; Mitchell 2006). This last has often been seen as a "Golden Age," a high point both of imperial political expansion and of culture and civilization (Maas 2005). In contrast, the seventh century has been seen as a "Dark Age," in which the empire was militarily and financially exhausted, ecclesiastical affairs created disaffection, Roman civic life came to an end, art and literature were in abeyance, and the rise of Islam changed the world. The picture is more nuanced than this would suggest, but certainly the seventh century seems to have been a period of conflict and change (Haldon 1997; Whitby 2000). The eighth century is regarded as the period of Iconoclasm ("image-breaking"), in which the debate over the role of religious images in church worship, led by the Isaurian emperors, dictated life in the empire (Bryer and Herrin 1977; for an alternative view, Haldon 2008 in Jeffreys, Haldon, Cormack (eds) 2008: 258–61; Brubaker in this volume). The Middle Byzantine period is dominated by the dynasties of the Amorians (820–67), the Macedonians (867–1056), the Komnenians (1057–1185, though a break in the early eleventh century) and the Angeloi (1185–1204). Byzantium shared with Rome a less-than-stable strategy of succession. Though sons and daughters often did inherit, usurpation, murder, and intrigue played a major part, especially in the change from one dynasty to another (neatly summarized by Holmes in Jeffreys, Haldon, Cormack (eds) 2008: 264-790; also Angold 1997; Magdalino 1993b; Treadgold 1997). This middle period often appears as "high" Byzantium, that part of the empire most typically "Byzantine," especially in cultural terms, and with the most influence on Western Europe. The Sack of Constantinople in 1204 changed the shape of the Western medieval world as the Christian forces of the Fourth Crusade effectively destroyed the Christian empire of Byzantium as a major power (Angold 2003). The Latin Empire of Constantinople lasted until 1261. Three "empires in exile," in Epiros, Trebizond and Nicaea, were established by the Byzantines in opposition to the Latins; it was the emperor in Nicaea who regained Constantinople and re-established a much shrunken and relatively ineffectual Byzantine empire, ruled for much of the period by the Palaeologan family until 1453 (Laiou in Jeffreys, Haldon, Cormack (eds) 2008: 280–94; Angold 1975; Barker 1969).

That then is the "monotonous story," neatly packaged by convenient dates in order to be manageable. The drawback of this "periodization" is the artificial markers it establishes, implying that things change with a bang—that Middle Byzantium in 848 was significantly different from Early Byzantium in 847. In any case, the Byzantines themselves calculated all dates from the Creation of the world, not from Christ's birth, and chroniclers such as Theophanes tended to date their works by "world years," *Anno Mundi* (AM) from the Creation. The Creation was generally reckoned to have taken place 5,508 years before the Incarnation; and the Second Coming of Christ, signifying the end of time, was known to be inevitable, and sometimes dated to 7,000 or 8,000 years from Creation. History therefore had its limits (Grumel 1958).

Map 1.1. Map of the Byzantine Empire, c.AD 400.

Although defining a time frame for the empire is a challenge, mapping Byzantium is even more problematic. The definition of boundaries is tricky to begin with: how and when was an area part, or not, of the empire? Was it "Byzantine" if it paid taxes to the emperor? If it had a Byzantine administration (however that might be defined)? If it was occupied by a Byzantine army? If it employed Byzantine art, culture, and customs? How did the Byzantines themselves define the extent of their empire? Maps depicting the area of the Byzantine empire are almost as varied as the books of Byzantine history that contain them. In this volume, two maps are included (Maps 1.1 and 1.2). The first shows the Roman empire in the fourth century. A line almost down the center marks the division between Western and Eastern empires on the death of Theodosios I in 395. After this, West and East went different ways: the East continued Roman until the fifteenth century; the West gradually crumbled and fragmented into separate realms under the pressure of a series of incursions from "barbarian" tribes to the north and south. The map also marks the major provinces (or dioceses) of the Roman empire at this point and major cities. Map 1.2 shows the empire in 1050 with the provinces (themes, as they were called by this time) marked, as well as areas under nominal Byzantine control. It gives a very clear idea of the porosity of boundaries and a sense of the issues inherent when we try to impose limits on states clearly fluid at their outer edges; the idea of nation-states was not one in common use in the medieval world (Anderson 1983. For issues with maps and the illusions they create, see Eastmond in this volume). Key cities and towns are again marked, and offer an interesting contrast with the important settlements of the earlier period.

One thing that the maps suggest is change both within and outside the empire, in terms of its geography and in terms of the other peoples pushing up against it. In the early period, it was Persians in the east, nomadic tribes from Asia in the north and from Africa to the south who offered the most threat to the empire; in later periods, it was the rise of Islam to the south and the Western European Crusaders who pressed on Byzantium. Byzantium's interaction with its neighbours was constantly fluid, one of influence, integration and conflict in both directions (Howard-Johnston, Mango in Jeffeys, Haldon and Cormack (eds) 2008: 939–56, 957–61).

The question of continuity and change, continuity versus change, is one that occupied the Byzantines and has long concerned scholars (Kazhdan and Wharton 1985). How much did the empire change and how much did the Byzantines recognize change? To Romans living in the Roman empire, that empire was unchanging, or so they claimed. New Rome was Old Rome reborn; the Roman empire held perpetual primacy among the nations. One of the implicit themes within this volume is of changing yet continuous institutions, beliefs, value-systems, culture. But from the start, there were two major differences between the Roman and Byzantine empires: Byzantium was, for much of its life, a Greek-speaking empire, orientated towards Greek, not Latin culture; and it was a Christian empire.

Greek within the empire was not one language, but one functioning at different levels of society. The version spoken by all classes in informal situations and by the uneducated at all times was one form, a *koine*, or "common," language, used for "subliterary" writings ranging from the New Testament to popular saints' lives and

Map 1.2. Map of the Byzantine Empire, c.1050.

chronicles such as that of Theophanes. At the other end of the scale was a version of Attic Greek, archaic and imitative of Greek from the Classical world, or, rather, the Byzantines' understanding of such Greek. This was the language of official, public and literary texts; mastery of it was a sign of intellectualism, education, and social standing (Browning 1983).

Christianity was the all-pervasive ideology of the Byzantine empire, its rituals, doctrines, and structures dominating every aspect of life. The empire itself was believed to be God's chosen empire, ruled by God's chosen emperor: one empire, one emperor under one God. This empire, in Byzantine belief, was the fourth, and last, of the four kingdoms revealed in the *Book of Daniel*, divinely preordained as the last empire; its fall would mean the end of the world. In being Byzantine, one was first and foremost Christian, though that Christianity might come in various forms and might lead to one's exclusion from the Byzantine *oikoumene*. This important term, meaning the inhabited world, was one with various resonances in Byzantium: it could be used to designate the world as a whole; to describe the inhabited or civilized world; and increasingly it carried a Christian significance as the world as the scene of Christ's activities and the correct celebration of the sacraments across the world.

This volume opens with a discussion of how Byzantine history has been seen and studied. It is then divided into four sections. *Being Byzantine* explores aspects of Byzantine life from economics to entertainment. Its unifying thread, though, is discussion around the topic of how we define "the Byzantines" and how they defined themselves: in relation to other people; in relation to different parts of the empire; in terms of age and appearance; emotionally; and in memory. The second section looks at God. As a Christian empire, self-defined as the chosen people of God, ruled by one emperor on the model of the heavenly hierarchy, the Byzantines saw God as permeating everything. This section explores something of the theology that underpinned Byzantine life and how that shaped people's lives inside and on the edge of the empire, as Orthodox and heretical Christians. The final two sections discuss and problematize the two sources we have for information about the Byzantine world: written texts and material remains. In *Reading Byzantine Texts*, questions about Byzantine writing strategies are foregrounded: how do we understand Byzantine literature? What did the Byzantines mean when they wrote in particular ways? What is the difference between a Byzantine history and a piece of rhetoric, and how can we read and understand them? And what can books themselves tell us? *Material Culture* looks at issues concerning some of the ways in which objects from Byzantium have been used to construct particular histories of the Byzantine world, from Iconoclasm to the Macedonian Renaissance.

Within this structure, themes and ideas cross-refer: center and periphery matter for both political history and our interpretation of material culture; the idea of a "renaissance" was born from how we have constructed Byzantine history from Edward Gibbon onward. The same figures from the Byzantine world reappear in different chapters, not emperors and political figures, but writers, the source of so much surviving evidence, put to so many different uses. Among the most recurrent are four authors. Theophanes (c.760–817 or 818) was a monk who wrote a

Chronicle, a history organized by year, from 285 to 813, written in a form of *koine*. Michael Psellos (1018 to after 1081?), an intellectual, courtier, philosopher, one-time monk and author, produced a variety of works, ranging from the historical (his *Chronographia*, arranged as lives of emperors) and philosophical to the rhetorical, theological, and personal. Anna Komnene (1083–c.1153–4) was the daughter and eldest child of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who longed to become empress herself. Banished to a monastery after scheming to raise her husband to the throne, she wrote a history-panegyric, the *Alexiad*, in sophisticated Greek, celebrating the reign of her father. Niketas Choniates (1155–7–1217) was a government official, historian and theologian who lost his livelihood in the Sack of Constantinople in 1204. His *History* covers the period 1118–1206; he also wrote a theological treatise refuting heresy, and speeches of his also survive. Saints' *Lives* (vitae) also recur regularly; what many of the papers in this book reveal is how the same evidence can be used in a variety of different ways, from discussing economics and the provinces to the emotions and literary theory.

This is not an "all you ever wanted to know about Byzantium but never dared ask" book. A companion is one who accompanies, and this volume was conceived in that light. Rather than a straightforward guide to Byzantium with a retelling of historical facts, and a detailed coverage of all aspects of life in Byzantium, this book offers the reader an introduction to some new approaches, new areas of research and new questions in Byzantine studies.

FURTHER READING

Byzantine Studies has been fortunate that within the past five years, several major books, all with detailed bibliographies, offering surveys of Byzantium, have been published. An aim of this book has been to try to avoid, as much as possible, duplication of much of this material. The *Oxford History of Byzantium* (Mango 2002) explores twelve major themes, including the rise of Islam, and Byzantine missionary activity. The *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Jeffreys, Haldon, Cormack (eds) 2008) is a substantial collection investigating a very broad range of Byzantine topics, from political history through the physical world, the institutions of the Byzantine world, the world around Byzantium, and the discipline of Byzantine Studies itself. The *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History* (Harris 2005) provides an introduction to the source material and covers a range of topics from political history to gender studies. The *Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Shepard (ed.) 2009b) is an excellent survey, arranged chronologically. Other volumes offering different takes on Byzantium include one looking specifically at social history (Haldon 2007) and a concise guide to Byzantine economics (Laiou and Morrison 2007). The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (*ODB*, 3 vols) is a very useful mini-encyclopedia of short entries on almost every topic imaginable. Cameron 2006a offers a very readable introduction to the Byzantines; also Gregory 2005 and Herrin 2007. Cunningham 2002 explains the importance of Christianity in Byzantium.

For perceptions of Byzantium, Nelson 1996 and Cormack and Jeffreys (eds) 2000 are good places to start.

CHAPTER TWO

Writing Histories of Byzantium: the Historiography of Byzantine History

F. K. Haarer

In August, 2006, over one thousand delegates gathered at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies in London. The theme of the Congress was "Display," and as noted by Judith Herrin in her opening address, "with this 21st International Congress [we] are determined to display the fascination of a lost world … Byzantium extended its influence far beyond the empire in time and space. And it is our task to uncover the many layers of this influence and to display them to the world." (Herrin 2006: 12). That the Byzantine Empire had a fascination and influence worth celebrating would have been found surprising by not only Gibbon, to whom so much Byzantine scholarship is a reaction, but also by Antonio Panizzi, the Principal Librarian at the British Museum, who in 1860, in answer to the question whether there were "Byzantine, Oriental, Mexican, and Peruvian antiquities stowed away in the basement," replied, "Yes, a few of them; and, I may well add, that I do not think it any great loss they are not better placed than they are" (Buckton 1994: 11).

Such an opening to a chapter on the historiography of Byzantine history follows the now clichéd introductions to many recent articles and monographs which note the emergence and rapid rise in popularity of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies as a discipline, but it does underline the very movement to be traced here. One of the reasons why Byzantine Studies has been slow to develop as a distinct area of study, apart from early negative press that the Byzantine Empire was a period of decline and decay filling the years between the end of the classical world and the Renaissance, which celebrated, as it did, the perfection of the former, is its very diversity, which calls for expertise across a range of subjects, including a greater range of languages than is demanded by study of the classical world, and an understanding of ecclesiastical history. Such diversity makes it impossible to produce a comprehensive outline of the formulation of Byzantine Studies as a field of study, which would necessarily include analysis of progress in not just linguistics and Church history, but also art history, architecture, archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and so on. I will therefore focus on developments within two areas of the history of Byzantine scholarship: first,

approaches to the question of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and the ways in which use of terminology (late antiquity, the late Roman Empire, Byzantium) informs our conception of this period; and second, how questions of ethnicity and the identity of the Byzantines intersect with contemporary politics, especially the expansion of the European Union and continuing tension between East and West. It is clear that the formulation of the discipline of Byzantine Studies has been marked by a number of seminal works, and I shall be considering their importance and influence, and to what extent they are a product of the political and intellectual age in which their authors were living.

Much scholarship is concerned directly or indirectly with the question of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and the corresponding view of Byzantium as a doomed state, partly because of its paradigmatic value for the study of imperialism (parallels are frequently drawn with the British Empire), and partly in response to the title of the most (in)famous early piece of scholarship, Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (for example, White 1966; Bowersock, Clive, Graubard 1976; Womersley 1997a, 1997b; McKitterick and Quinault 1997). Gibbon recorded his decision to undertake this monumental work several times: "It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind" (Murray 1897: 302). This plan developed into the history of the whole Roman Empire, both East and West, down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and therefore forms one of the early studies on the origins of Europe and the Middle Ages. However, Gibbon himself had been influenced both by previous approaches to the study of Byzantium and by the politics and culture of his contemporary society.

Early Byzantine Scholarship

In the mid-fifteenth century, Flavio Brondo wrote a history of Italy *ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii*, dating the decline of Rome from the sack of the city in 410, and attributing the decline to the barbarians. While many historians followed Brondo, others (such as Machiavelli and Paruta in the sixteenth century) looked for internal causes within Rome's constitution. In France, however, where Byzantine history was extremely popular, less emphasis was placed on these negative aspects. The editor and scholar, Labbé, appealed to European scholars to find and publish texts, and stressed the importance of the eastern Greek Empire: "so astonishing in the number of events, so alluring in its diversity, so remarkable in the length of its duration" (Vasiliev 1952: 4). Byzantine studies were further boosted by the work of the prolific Du Cange (1610–88) (Spieser 2000) and a number of other scholars in the seventeenth century, but during the eighteenth century the intellectual climate of France changed, and in the new Age of Reason, religion, the power of the clergy and the monarchy were called into question. In 1734, Montesquieu published his *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*, in which he blamed the power of the army and excess luxury, describing the history of the Greek Empire

as "a tissue of revolts, seditions and perfidies" (Vasiliev 1952: 6). The anti-Christian tone which pervaded his work was developed by Voltaire, who described Byzantine history as a "worthless collection [which] contains nothing but declamations and miracles. It is a disgrace to the human mind" (Vasiliev 1952: 6).

Appreciation of the culture of Byzantium was not helped by a correspondingly dim view of its artistic achievements. In 1450, Lorenzo Ghiberti saw the classical period as ending with the destruction of classical monuments by the Christians during the reign of Constantine, followed by a period of artistic decline until the fourteenth-century Renaissance led by Giotto. In 1550, Giorgio Vasari followed this tripartite scheme, though he blamed not the Christians but the invading barbarians from the north for the decline of classical art forms (Weitzmann 1980: 1ff.). The study of Byzantine art has struggled to emerge from this perspective (Nelson 1996).

Edward Gibbon (1737–94) and *Decline and Fall*

Gibbon was very much influenced by the values and moral prejudices of the Renaissance and of the European Enlightenment which, in their haste to dismiss the decadence of Byzantium, overlooked the fact that much of the celebrated culture of western Christendom had been refined and preserved by the Byzantines who had brought it to Italy from Constantinople (A. M. Cameron 2006: 4). Gibbon himself, though part of a society progressive in terms of parliamentary governance and socio-economics, disparaged the achievements of Byzantium across all spheres, including the military, theological, and architectural (Haldon 2000b: 142f.). Although not actively involved in politics, he sat as an MP from 1774 to 1783, usually siding with the Tory government (Lossky 1966: 19ff.). His *Decline and Fall* was published in three instalments in 1776, 1781, and 1788, and it is hard not to read it in the context of contemporary world politics—the American Revolution of 1776 and the subsequent fall of the first British Empire, and the French Revolution of 1789 (Momigliano 1980: 7). It is certainly true that Gibbon, the "universal historian," saw in the Roman Empire "a paradigm of the universal dilemma of empires," "convinced that societies widely scattered in space and time were comparable" (Brown 1982: 25f.).

The notorious and oft-quoted negative assessments of the Byzantine Empire by Gibbon and his followers resulted in the prevailing view of Byzantium as a product of "the triumph of barbarism and Christianity" (Gibbon 1896–1900: chapter 71, VIII.308; Lossky 1966: 27; Womersley 2000: 152–5). In fact, Gibbon's view was actually far more complex. His approach was not exclusively that of a classicist, and his work shows the influence of the philosophical and sociological ideas of his friends, Adam Smith and David Hume, and of two leading figures in Orientalism, Carsten Niebhur and Sir William Jones (Momigliano 1980: 8). In his "General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West" (appended to chapter 38, IV.160ff.), he argued that there were four main causes for the fall of Rome: immoderate greatness; wealth and luxury; the deluge of the barbarians; and the spread of Christianity. His attention was drawn to the role of Christianity in the demise of Rome by the polemic texts of pagans and Christians which highlighted the inherent conflict

between Christianity and the Roman Empire to the detriment of the latter (Momigliano 1980: 13). Further, he saw that "folly" and "the irrational," two concepts he disdained, were epitomized in the behaviour of the ascetic monks and ornate court ceremonial which so dominated Byzantium (Brown 1982: 22–48).

It was the sentiments of Gibbon, along with the eurocentric and moralizing nature of Victorian society, which tended to influence historians such as William Lecky, who wrote: "Of that Byzantine empire, the universal verdict of history is that it constitutes without a single exception, the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilization has yet assumed" (1869: II.13f.). There were a few exceptions: a more sympathetic approach was taken by the English historian and philhellene, George Finlay (1799–1875), for example. Earlier, the German philosopher Hegel (1770–1831) had observed in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*: "The realm was in a condition of perpetual insecurity … its general aspect presents a disgusting picture of imbecility; wretched, nay insane, passions stifle the growth of all that is noble in thoughts, deeds and persons… such are the scenes which history here brings before us; till at last about the middle of the fifteenth century (AD 1453) the rotten edifice of the Eastern Empire crumbled in pieces before the might of the vigorous Turks" (cf. Vasiliev 1952: 6). Statesmen cited Byzantium as an example to avoid. Napoleon I appealed for aid in 1815: "Let us not follow the example of the Byzantine Empire, which, being pressed from all sides by the barbarians, became the laughing-stock of posterity because it was preoccupied with petty quarrels while the battering ram was breaking through the city gates" (Vasiliev 1952: 7). Later in the nineteenth century, however, obsession with Rome's fall was replaced by the more positive approach taken by a number of nationalistic German historians whose concern to present the German invasions in a positive light necessitated a shift away from questions of decline towards the emergence of Europe and the Middle Ages (Momigliano 1980: 8). But by the end of the century and in the context of the growth of imperialism, interest was again stimulated in the causes of Rome's fall with works such as Thomas Hodgkin's "The Fall of the Roman Empire and its Lessons for Us."

Meanwhile, in a rejection of the familiar suggestions of Christianity, barbarian invasions, and the corruption and decadence of court life, an alternative model for the fall of the Empire was proposed by Marx, Engels and their followers, who suggested that changes in the social structure, such as the decline of the cities and replacement of slaves by serfs in agriculture led to the fall of the Empire. This model influenced Weber in his essay, "Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum," was partly accepted by Rostovtzeff, who agreed that conflict between city and country had sparked decline (Momigliano 1966: 91–104, 1980: 10; on Rostovtzeff, see Liebeschuetz 1992), and was adopted by Geoffrey de Ste Croix who argued that the causes of decline were "above all, economic and social" (Ste Croix 1981: 502f.). Interestingly, in the late twentieth century, which has seen the fall of communism, there has been a move away from Marxist economic models of explanation and from institutional, administrative, and economic history (a movement not exclusive to late antiquity: Ward-Perkins 2006: 179f.). The opening of modern boundaries in Europe has led historians to focus on aspects of late antiquity they believe show the same fluidity (A. M. Cameron 2002: 176).

Although a Marxist interpretation of events was not comprehensively adopted, acceptance that the collapse of the Roman Empire may not have been the result of the barbarian invasions of the third century onwards allowed the date of decline to be pushed later and led to yet another model for the fall of the Empire: the Pirenne Thesis. The Belgian medieval historian, Henri Pirenne, considered the history and economy of post-Roman Europe while interned in a concentration camp during the First World War. His desire not to credit the German invaders of the late Roman world with any significant role in the formulation of the western medieval world led him to stand back from the traditional view of a fifth-century division between the classical and medieval periods, and instead to blame the Arab invasions of the seventh century. In contrast, after the Second World War, the anti-German sentiment of the French historians Piganiol (1947) and Courcelle (1948) led them to take a different view and ascribe the fall of the Roman Empire to the barbarous German tribes. Pirenne developed his views in a number of works and finally in his monograph, *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, published posthumously in 1937. The central tenet of the Pirenne thesis is that the overthrow of Roman supremacy by the Arabs broke the economic unity of the Mediterranean world; the isolation of the Merovingian kings in northwest Europe led to the rise of the Carolingians, while the isolation of Italy caused the Pope to ally himself with the Carolingians. These events resulted in the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome in AD 800. Pirenne could therefore famously extrapolate: "It is therefore strictly correct to say that without Mahommed, Charlemagne would have been inconceivable" (Pirenne 1939: 234). To this model of the economic collapse of the structure of the ancient world, which postponed the demise of the classical world from the traditional date of the fifth century to the seventh century, there have been many reactions (for example, Lambard 1947, 1948; Braudel 1949; Riising 1952; Havighurst 1958; Grierson 1959; Lyon 1972; Brown 1982: 63–79; Hodges and Whitehouse 1983; Hodges and Bowden 1998).

Byzantine Studies in Britain …

Byzantine Studies in the UK at the turn of the twentieth century were shaped by the work of Bury, Baynes and Toynbee. J. B. Bury (1861–1927) held both the Chair of Greek and that of Modern History at Dublin, before becoming Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, positions which reflected his encompassing approach to scholarship in both the history and literature of the Classical and Byzantine worlds. Bury's view of the Byzantine Empire was one of continuity from the Roman world: "the old Roman Empire did not cease to exist until the year 1453. The line of Roman Emperors continued in an unbroken succession from Octavius Augustus to Constantine Palaiologus … such expressions as Byzantine, Greek, or Romaic Empire are highly objectionable, because they tend to obscure an important fact and perpetrate a serious error" (Bury 1889: Baynes 1929, A. M. Cameron 2000). N. H. Baynes (1877–1961), Professor of Byzantine History at University College London, turned away from the narrative political history of Bury and the German scholar Ernst Stein, and focused on the religion and culture of Byzantium, thus prefiguring the work of

Peter Brown, especially on saints' lives. Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975), Professor of Modern Greek at King's College London, presented an interpretation of the Byzantine world strongly influenced by the works of Seeck and Beloch (Momigliano 1980: 9f.). He saw the origins of the fall of Rome in the decline of Greece, and emphasized a definite break between the Hellenic and the Byzantine world. Although few would embrace his theories today, especially his view that the decline of Roman civilization could be traced back to the defeat of Athens by Sparta in 431 BC, Toynbee, along with Baynes and Bury, had an influential role in the development of Byzantine Studies.

… And the British Abroad: Developments in Archaeology

The twentieth century also saw important developments which enabled archaeological research to flourish. In 1908, the Byzantine Research and Publication Fund and the Asia Minor Fund were formed, and the Royal Geographical Society and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies both funded scholars such as Gertrude Bell and Sir William Ramsay, who worked on the Byzantine period. Under the British Mandate in Palestine, a Department of Antiquities was set up and the British School of Jersualem was established in 1919. These foundations enabled research to be carried out on early Christian and Byzantine churches, continuing up to the recent work of Martin Biddle on the Aedicule over the Tomb of Christ (Biddle 1999). In Turkey, Sir William Calder continued William Ramsay's work carrying out survey work in the 1920s, and in 1932 the first volume of his *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* was published. The first British fieldwork was carried out on wall paintings and mosaics by David Talbot Rice, who also published research on the Great Palace excavations, icons in Cyprus, and Hagia Sophia in Trebizond. In the interwar years, much work was carried out in Cyprus and Palestine which has been continued by A. H. S. Megaw, E. J. W. Hawkins, and Cyril Mango. Scholars such as Richard Goodchild, Martin Harrison, and Elizabeth Rosenbaum were able to take advantage of Britain's occupation of Libya after the Second World War, and the establishment of the British Institute at Ankara in 1948 and the British Institute at Amman in 1978 encouraged the pursuit of fieldwork in Turkey and Jordan (Winfield 2000).

The Triumph of Byzantium: Byzantine Studies from the 1950s

A number of comprehensive histories of Byzantium which considered questions of decline and fall were produced (or translated into English) in the 1950s (Stein 1949–59; Vasiliev 1952; Jones 1955; Boak 1955; Ostrogorsky 1956; Mazzarino 1959). A more positive approach to Byzantium had been offered by Marrou, who proposed a model of a culture which was evolving to replace one of decadence and decline (1949; Liebeschuetz 2001a: 235). However, it was the 1960s and 1970s which saw the publication of a number of seminal works. In 1963, Momigliano published *The Conflict of Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, which sought to reassert the link between the rise of Christianity and the decline of Rome

(though without the negativism of Gibbon), as opposed to the socio-economic theories proposed by Dopsch, Pirenne and Rostovtzeff. This was followed in 1964 by Jones's magisterial *The Later Roman Empire*, which provided not only a narrative of the period 264–602 but also a thematic study of the governance of empire, the economy, religion, culture, and the question of decline (Brown 1967: 327–43; Liebeschuetz 1992: 1–8). In a movement away from theological approaches, and the political and military histories of the 1950s, this was an administrative, social, and economic history based largely on the evidence from the law codes of Theodosios and Justinian. Characterizing the later Empire as a "top-heavy" society with its vastly increased army and bureaucracy, Jones criticized the Church's role in the economy as an institution harbouring "idle mouths" (Jones II.894–914, 1046–7), though he also judged that "barbarian attacks probably played a major role in the fall of the West" (Jones II.1027). Although influenced by Rostovtzeff, Jones's views on the continuity of the ancient world and the economy differed significantly. He believed agriculture (not trade and manufacture) to be the basis of the wealth of the ancient city, and saw a continuation of the classical world far beyond the chronological boundaries of Rostovtzeff, who argued that there was significant change after the early fourth century.

However, it was the publication in 1971 of Peter Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity* which, in its exploration of society and culture, made the study of the post-classical period attractive. Influences from the works of historians and theologians such as Rostovtzeff, Marrou, Piganiol, Baynes, Jones, Braudel, and Dodds, from the anthropologist Mary Douglas, and from his own research into Sasanian and early Islamic history, came together to produce the Brownian view, which focused on the religious and cultural revolution of late antiquity. Mobility up and down the social and intellectual scale associated with the rise and diffusion of religious ideas, and especially with the rise of Christianity, was understandable given the enthusiasm for social mobility in 1960s Britain (Brown 1997: 14). Brown's model of late antiquity exerts a powerful influence especially through his series, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage*. He also published in 1971 an article, "The rise and function of the holy man in late antiquity," which, alongside the book, reinforced the change of direction in methodological approach to Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, as well as influencing the next generation of studies in hagiography (Brown 1971b, Hackel 1981, Howard-Johnston and Hayward 1999). The study of Early Byzantium in particular has been influenced by the *annales* school of history following Braudel's concept of the *longue durée* model explored in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, which favours the view that change in society and civilization is not triggered by specific people or events, but as a result of long-term, underlying movements (A. M. Cameron 2002: 178–9; Mitchell 2006: 8).

Contemporary Approaches to Byzantium

Despite the optimistic Brownian approach, questions of decline and its causes are still hotly disputed. In 1980, Momigliano returned to the question of why Rome fell, concluding that "Rome fell because it was conquered. German tribes took over the

western part of the Empire, and, if we want a cause, this is it …" (1980: 13). For Momigliano, Gibbon's emphasis on the role of Christianity offered a helpful framework, though he argued that it was pointless to query whether Christianity adversely affected the army or increased the burden of taxation (1980: 14). While historians such as Schiavores and MacMullen were still persuaded by theories of decline, others considered the barbarian invasions in a more positive light, emphasizing concepts of integration and accommodation (Musset 1965; Goffart 1980; Pohl 1997), and Bowersock went so far as to state that "In 1995 it is fair to say that no responsible historian would want to address or acknowledge the fall of Rome as either a fact or a paradigm … The fall of Rome is no longer needed" (1996: 42). However, that debate on the fall is still current is evidenced by the work of Liebeschuetz and reactions to it. Liebeschuetz has argued in favour of decline in a book appropriately entitled *The decline and fall of the later Roman city*, and he explores these issues in an article where he argues that "decline or downward tendency or deterioration is blatantly obvious in late antiquity," and selects seven areas including towns, trade, and literacy to show that the end of the *pax romana* spelt the end of empire (2001a). For Liebeschuetz, the rejection of theories of decline mean the acceptance of explanations based on catastrophes rather than long-term trends. To this there were a number of responses, the most critical from Mark Whittow, who argued against the relevance of the notion of decline for both the Roman and British Empires (both empires fell but neither could be said to decline) and concludes, following Bowersock, that "decline … is no longer needed" (Whittow 2001: 241–3). However, Liebeschuetz is supported by Ward-Perkins: both suggest that too much attention has been paid to the smooth assimilation of barbarians into Roman society, offering the impression that the end of Roman political power was peaceful and untraumatic; in their view the current inclination towards "transformation" rather than "decline" has gone too far (Ward-Perkins 2006: 3ff., 169ff.). Peter Heather also considers the role of the barbarians, arguing that the combination of the military, economic and political problems afflicting the late Roman Empire, coinciding with the greater organization, unification, and wealth of the previously disparate barbarian tribes, allowed the latter to destroy what they most admired: thus, "By virtue of its unbounded aggression, Roman imperialism was ultimately responsible for its own destruction" (2006: 459).

It is certainly the case that contemporary trends in political theory continue to dictate our perception of decline and fall in the post-classical world. As Averil Cameron argues, "significant social and cultural change require[s] some kind of crisis or deficiency as its driving factor," and therefore we should look for crisis in the late Roman state, whether external or internal (A. M. Cameron 1998: 9ff.). However, the consensus today is that terms such as "crisis," which imply a value judgement, should be avoided in favour of expressions like "change" and "transformation." At the opening of the twenty-first century, in a move away from imperialist ideology which highlighted political and cultural boundaries, the emphasis in a politically correct world is now on assimilation and acculturation. One of the consequences of such an approach is a far later reading of late antiquity into the seventh century and beyond. An early example was, of course, Pirenne's overarching model which crossed

geographical and political boundaries, a model used extensively by the European Science Foundation project (1992–7), *The Transformation of the Roman World* AD *400–900*. However, while such anti-imperialist discourse has freed the study of the post-classical world from the stigma of being "post-classical" and therefore inferior, and has opened up the possibility of admitting the importance of Armenian, Syriac, and Coptic sources alongside Greek and Latin, it has also dimmed the traumatic effect of the barbarian invasions and produced a distorting effect on current views of the Roman Empire. As Ward-Perkins argues, although "imposition of Roman power had certainly been brutal … in time the Roman empire evolved into something rather remarkable, very different from any modern empire … Quite unlike any modern empire, Rome did not fall because its provincial subjects struggled to be 'free'" (2006: 176).

Along with these continuing debates on the usage of terms such as "decline" and "fall," there is a new awareness of how we study the period, helped by the increased use of archaeological material and visual art, and the many new editions of texts (Brown 1997: 22–7; A. M. Cameron 1998: 27ff., 2002, 2006). We also have new anthropological approaches to apply to the study of Byzantium such as gender studies, and rhetoric and communication, and we may also use theological, hagiographical and apocryphal texts for the study of not just the religious life of Byzantium but also cultural and sociological aspects (A. M. Cameron 2002: 180ff.; Ward-Perkins 2006: 180). However, despite these advances, difficulties remain. In her recent monograph, *The Byzantines*, Averil Cameron argues that the difficulty of defining Byzantium has contributed to its absence in the scholarship of both classicists and western medieval historians (A. M. Cameron 2006: viiiff., 1ff.).

One problem is terminology (Mitchell 2006: 5f.). The use of the term "Late Roman Empire" leads to expectations of a narrative history of the Roman state and its institutions, an approach going back to Gibbon, followed by the significantly entitled works of Bury (1923), Stein (1949–59), Jones (1964), and Mitchell (2006), while those who use "Late Antiquity," exponents of the Brownian view, are primarily concerned with the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, giving a positive view by privileging cultural, social, and religious themes over political and institutional narrative which traditionally led to negative comparisons with the Roman Empire. Those who use the term "Byzantine" focus on the eastern half of the Empire, rather than the Germanic kingdoms and rise of medieval Europe, but do so at their peril, considering the pejorative connotations of the very term "Byzantium." The popularity of the concept of "late antiquity," which covers a wide geographical area and invites a multicultural approach breaking down the barriers in traditional scholarship (for example, the use of visual evidence and material culture by textual historians, and religious history by political historians) is especially popular today (*CAH XIV*: 972ff.; A. M. Cameron 2002: 176f.) as it suits the permissive and multicultural intellectual and political climate which shies away from imposing rigid chronologies and divisions between contemporary societies and cultures. Indeed, increased awareness of, and emphasis on, continuity in so many areas of Greco-Roman civilization (both governance and culture) throughout the fourth to the sixth century and beyond blurs the boundaries between the end of the classical world, late antiquity and the Byzantine

world, and makes periodization more difficult to rationalize. The traditional span of AD c.300–600 for the period of "late antiquity," also seen as "Early Byzantium," is being replaced by a longer spread of AD 200–800 and coined the "long late antiquity." This extended period encompasses two great innovations in religious history—the rise and spread of Christianity and of Islam. Averil Cameron notes the increasing desire of scholars to see continuity after the Arab invasions, and to demonstrate the influence of Judaism and Hellenism on Islam, concluding that "some historians, not without plausibility, present Islamic culture not as the destroyer but as the culmination of that of late antiquity" (A. M. Cameron 1998: 13–15, 18f.). A longer late antiquity also includes the period of Iconoclasm and the critical date of AD 800 (A. M. Cameron 1998: 23; 2002: 190f.; Mitchell 2006: 5). Those who follow this revisionist view emphasizing continuity over change include Bowersock 1990, Bowersock, Brown, Grabar 1999, Whittow 1990, and Fowden 1993. Ward-Perkins 2006 notes the attempt of the EU to imply a seamless transition from Roman times to the Middle Ages. But when there can be no agreement in imposing periodization in the sixth, seventh, or eighth centuries, there is nothing to prevent the year 1000 becoming an equally convincing dividing line: in his *Rise of Western Christendom*, Peter Brown sees the very definition of his title as spanning the years from the reign of Constantine to 1000 (cf. Randsborg 1991; Bartlett 1993; A. M. Cameron 1998: 26). Ranged against this *longue durée* view are, for example, Hugh Kennedy (1985) and Ward-Perkins, who argues that a "long and rosy Late Antiquity, reaching even to AD 800 … seriously distorts the history of the West after about 400, and that of the Aegean region after around 600" (2006: 170ff.).

It is not only questions of chronological boundaries which have dictated the ways in which Byzantium has been approached: the difficulty of probing the identity and ethnogenesis of the Byzantines also contributes to the problem of modern study. The term "Byzantine" was not used until the sixteenth century. The Byzantines referred to themselves as *Romaioi* and thought of their empire as a continuation of the Roman Empire (the new Rome) (Mango 1980: 1), though the language and culture of the Eastern Empire was Greek (Haldon 2000a: 9; Kaldellis 2007). Furthermore, "the Byzantines themselves were deeply involved in the ethnogenesis of other peoples, including the Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Hungarians and the Russians, and were inextricably involved in the development of Europe" (A. M. Cameron 2006: ix). The interaction of Byzantium with both the West and the Islamic world has influenced how it has been studied over the last one hundred and fifty years by Europeans and how it is now perceived in the new axis between Europe, America and Islam.

In Europe, Byzantium is seen as peripheral, little studied in schools or universities, yet the need to explain the formation of Europe has encouraged reflection on questions of ethnicity and exploration of the integration of barbarian tribes into the Roman Empire (Pohl 1997; Ahrweiler and Laiou 1998; Mitchell and Greatrex 2000). Mitchell notes the importance of the study of late Roman history for helping "our understanding of the evolution of the Roman and Sassanian Empires, the role of Christianity as a defining force within society, the role of smaller civic units, the

impact of the barbarian migrations, and the political and social transformations that followed from them" (2006: 9).

However, the Roman Empire as a role model for modern Europe is not without problems for the "shared Christian heritage … is awkward for present-day reasons … Christianity … is now as diverse as it was once unifying … linking Europe with Christianity might give the Pope ideas above his station, would be disturbingly 'American,' and would certainly clash with liberal and left-wing European traditions of secularist politics" (Ward-Perkins 2006: 174). The negative connotations of the use of the Roman Empire as a model for national and imperial rule by Mussolini are clear, and Ward-Perkins draws attention to the connection between the center of the European Union on the Strasbourg–Frankfurt–Brussels axis close to the center of the eighth- to ninth-century Frankish Empire (especially Aachen) and the recent rehabilitation of the German (especially Frankish) barbarians (Aillagon 2008).

Meanwhile, the study of Byzantium in Orthodox countries is also problematic. The legacy of Byzantium is clearly evident in the ecclesiastical art, architecture, and spiritual life of Mount Athos, Meteora, and monastic centers throughout the Balkans, yet conflicting ideals of reception are at work (A. M. Cameron 2006: 175ff.). Desire to emphasize their links with the classical past led the Greeks to remove all trace of not just the hated Ottoman rule, but also the intervening Byzantine centuries, yet an alternative view sees the roots of Greek nationalism and orthodoxy in Byzantium and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 as a "national trauma." The failure to regain Constantinople at the beginning of the twentieth century, the subsequent emergence of modern Turkey, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the revival of Orthodoxy in Greece, the Balkans, and Russia made "the place occupied by Greece in the debates about European identity … a highly sensitive issue" (A. M. Cameron 2006: 177). Indeed, the recent expansion of the European Union has caused many central and Eastern European countries to reconsider their European roots (A. M. Cameron 2002: 175; 2006: 5; Laiou and Maguire 1992), but while many parts of Europe (Serbia, Albania, Hungary, and Greece) remember struggles with the Turks, it is not inconceivable that Turkey itself will become part of the EU and thus bring to an end the dilemma of an empire which looked both east and west (A. M. Cameron 2006: 163ff.). At the start of the twenty-first century, there is the more pressing problem of the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, which has its roots in the Arab conquests of Byzantine territory in the seventh century. As for the break-up of Yugoslavia, it has been argued that Byzantium (the precursor of the Ottoman Empire) is at the root of the religious and political tensions in the Balkans today and the rise of nationalism there (Mazower 2000).

The study of Byzantium in Russia, which had once aspired to be the Third Rome, has also enjoyed mixed fortunes (Vasiliev 1952: 32ff.). In pre-revolutionary Russia, its significance was celebrated by T. N. Granovsky at Moscow University: "We have taken over from Tsargrad [Constantinople] the best part of our national culture, namely, our religious beliefs and the beginnings of civilization … but besides these connections we are bound up with the fate of the Byzantine empire by the mere fact that we are Slavs …" (cf. Vasiliev 1952: 33). The field of Byzantine studies was

expanded by the works of V. G. Vasilievsky, N. P. Kondakov, and Th. I. Uspensky (Vasiliev 1952: 33–8), and after a period of neglect in the Soviet period, Byzantium is enjoying a period of nascent popularity.

Conclusion

The First International Congress of Byzantine Studies was held in Bucharest in 1924 when plans were advanced for the publication of a new journal, *Byzantion*, an international review of Byzantine studies. This followed the foundation of the *Byzantinsiche Zeitschrift* in Germany in 1892, the *Vizantiysky Vremennik* (*Byzantine Annals*) in Russia in 1894, and the *Byzantinische Neugriechische Jahrbucher* in Berlin 1920. There are now not just a large number of national and international journals, but many source books (for example, Lieu and Montserrat 1996, Maas 2000, Lee 2000, Greatrex and Lieu 2002), and this *Blackwell Companion to Byzantium* is one of several handbooks, a testament to the growth and popularity of the subject today. Prosopographies such as the *Prosopography of the Late Roman Empire* (1971–92), and the British Academy web-based *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire* (http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/) have also helped to advance the study of Byzantium. In Britain, the study of Byzantium in British universities has grown with the foundation of the Bywater and Sotheby Chair at Oxford in 1908 (Mackridge 2000), the Koraes Chair at King's College London in 1919, and later with the development of Byzantine studies at Birmingham, Newcastle, and Belfast (Bryer 1988). The Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies was founded in 1983, "with the object of furthering study and knowledge of the history and culture, language and literature of the Byzantine Empire and its neighbours." The Society's 1995 Symposium (Cormack and Jeffreys 2000) explored British responses to Byzantium and underlines, along with the success of the latest international congress, both the concern to "display" a more positive view of Byzantium and its relevance for contemporary politics.

FURTHER READING

Assessments of Byzantine Studies today as a discipline can be found in the introductions and conclusions to many recent works: for example, Bowersock, Brown, Grabar (1999); *CAH* XIV (2000); Harris (2005); A. M. Cameron (2006); Ward-Perkins (2006); and Mitchell (2006). The last three especially address previous and current perceptions of Byzantium: in particular, the lingering negative views of Byzantium despite the recent growth in the popularity of late antiquity (for which also see Giardina 1999), and the impact of contemporary politics on the study of Byzantium. Averil Cameron also explores developments in Byzantine historiography in her lecture, "Perceptions of a crisis" (Spoleto, 1998) and her article, "The 'long' late antiquity: a twentieth-century model" (Oxford, 2002). It is possible to trace debates in Byzantine scholarship by following reactions to the seminal works of, for example, Gibbon (a number of conference proceedings: White 1966; Bowersock, Clive, Graubard 1976; edited volumes: Womersley 1997a, 1997b; McKitterick and Quinault 1997; and articles: Momigliano 1980; Liebeschuetz 2001a), Pirenne (Lyon 1972; Hodges and Bowden 1998; Hodges and

Whitehouse 1993), and now Jones (Brown 1967; Liebeschuetz 1992), and Brown. Especially interesting is the *Symbolae Osloenses* debate (1997) to mark the twenty-first anniversary of *The World of Late Antiquity*, in which ten scholars were invited to respond to Peter Brown's vision of late antiquity then and now. Several general monographs include surveys of Byzantine scholarship, one of the most useful (though only as far as the 1950s) being Vasiliev 1952: 2–42. For the scholarship of (mainly) British Byzantinists, see the proceedings of the 1995 Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies symposium, *Though the Looking Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes* (2000).

PART I

Being Byzantine

CHAPTER THREE

Economics, Trade, and "Feudalism"

Peter Sarris

Introduction: the Sources and their Problems

As with every other aspect of Byzantine studies, our ability to come to terms with the economic and social realities that underpinned and framed Byzantine civilization is critically determined by the nature of the sources that are available to us. Broadly speaking, these sources can be sub-divided into five categories: the documentary; the legal; the literary; the archaeological; and the numismatic. In many respects it is the last two of these categories which, over the last thirty years or so, have done the most to transform opinions and perspectives. More and more archaeology has been uncovered, new and more sophisticated techniques for analyzing both it and the testimony of the Byzantine coinage have been pioneered, and consequently much more evidence has come to light. By contrast, the body of documentary, literary, and legal evidence has proved to be rather more static, and as a result the key to advancing knowledge has been to find new ways of reading the evidence we already have, rather than the discovery of caches of hitherto unheard-of archives or texts (although newly edited papyri do continue to be forthcoming). It is important to understand the limitations of each of these types of source, however, as well as the opportunities that they offer. Each type of source can be seen to potentially distort our understanding in different ways, and thus risk resulting in a skewed perception of the workings of the Byzantine economy or of social relations.

It is in terms of documentary evidence that the historian of the Byzantine economy is at his or her most disadvantaged in comparison to the western medievalist. For most regions of the Byzantine world for most of its history we have no substantial documentary record of any sort whatsoever. The great exception to this rule is Egypt, which was ruled from Constantinople until first the Sasanian and then the Arab conquests of the early seventh century. For here, the dry sands of the Nile Valley have preserved hundreds of documentary texts written on papyrus—letters, petitions, contracts, estate accounts—dating from the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries,

that provide vivid insights into life as actually lived by peasants, landowners, tenants, and merchants. The picture that emerges is of a highly sophisticated and profoundly monetized economy in which there existed an efficient and profit-driven commercialized agricultural sector dominated by aristocratic great landowners who took an active interest in the commodified production of their estates (Banaji 2001; Sarris 2006). But economic specialization and commercialized production were by no means limited to the "aristocratic sector" alone, as many of the papyri emergent from a village milieu demonstrate (Keenan 1980). Certainly, it was easier for great landowners than it was for peasant farmers to benefit from economies of scale on their estates, and to spread the considerable risk of specialized cash-cropping across a series of landholdings, but there was evidently a high degree of social differentiation within peasant communities, and the wealthier peasant farmers were in a strong position to emulate such agrarian strategies.

The problem is that we have no comparable body of documentary evidence for any other region (although we do have some papyri from Nessana in southern Palestine and Petra in Jordan). As a result, the question inevitably emerges of to what extent it is sensible to project the testimony of the Egyptian papyri onto other, less-well-recorded regions (Wickham 2005: 22–5). In Egypt, agriculture was primarily dependent on the annual inundation of the River Nile, which generally facilitated regular and reliable returns from the land. This in turn meant that the region could support a very high population density (perhaps a quarter of the entire population of the late-antique Eastern Empire is thought to have lived in Egypt), thereby guaranteeing a ready market not only for agricultural produce but also for manufactured goods. Both goods and people could also travel along the Nile relatively easily and cheaply, thus further facilitating economic integration. It is perfectly conceivable, therefore, that the economy of Byzantine Egypt represented a pinnacle of late-antique economic development and sophistication set in a more general Mediterranean landscape characterized by a comparative primitivism of economic organization, in which most producers aimed at subsistence rather than profit and may have had considerable difficulty achieving even that.

With the loss of Byzantine control in Egypt, we effectively lose sight of documentary sources until the mid-to-late Byzantine period, when evidence again begins to emerge concerning monastic and aristocratic estates. Interestingly, both in relation to aristocratic estates in Late Antiquity and those recorded for the later period, we encounter considerable similarities in terms of accounting technique and economic outlook, with land being seen as "profit-producing capital" and estates being structured in an essentially bipartite manner, focused on a cash-cropping estate demesne known as the *autourgia* (Sarris 2006; Laiou 2002a: 357 and 2002d: 1151). Does this represent continuity in a key aspect of economic life? Is it perhaps indicative of a certain circularity in Byzantine economic development? Of itself, the documentary evidence is too sparse to permit us to answer either of these questions with certainty. As we shall see, however, the possibilities are highly suggestive.

Fortunately the Byzantinist is much better served with regard to legal texts than documentary ones: in particular, we have a series of codifications of imperial legislation stretching from the *Theodosian Code* of the early fifth century to the *Justinianic*

Code and Justinian's post-codificatory "novels" ("new constitutions") of the sixth, through to the Middle Byzantine reworking of the Justinianic legal corpus in the form of the so-called *Basilica* of Leo VI (896–912) and the constitutions of his tenth-century successors, which record crucial aspects of the legal framework within which much economic activity was conducted. These laws address such important matters as relations between landowners and peasants; the regulations incumbent on key trades such as the silk industry or arms production; the rates at which it was legitimate for interest to be charged on loans and transactions; and, absolutely vital to the economic development of any society, how property was to be securely transmitted or inherited.

The problems with this legal evidence are essentially three-fold. First, and most obviously, laws are a rather better guide to attitudes and ideologies than they are to behaviour and actions. To what extent were laws actually enforced? Were they only enforced against the Emperor's enemies, or against his allies as well? Because of the dearth of documentary evidence we are only very rarely in a position to tell: again, it is only really in late-antique Egypt that we get to see what Byzantine law looked like "on the ground," although for the eleventh century we also possess a highly illuminating "case-book" of Byzantine law compiled by Eustathius Rhomaios (Gagos and Van Minnen 1994; Simon 1973). Second, once again as a result of the critical absence of a documentary context in which to situate the legislation, it can be very difficult to reconstruct the circumstances and conditions that led emperors to legislate. In both the sixth century and the tenth, for example, the imperial authorities issued laws seeking to prevent great landowners from illegally acquiring the estates of their peasant neighbours (Sarris 2006; Morris 1976; McGeer 2000). But what does the phenomenon of this legislation actually reveal of social and economic processes? Was the state (as most have supposed) reacting to defend a helpless peasantry against the exploitative ruses of an expansive and land-hungry aristocracy? Or was it rather responding to the petitions of self-confident and well-established farming communities fearlessly, litigiously, and perhaps successfully standing up for what they knew to be their rights? The former is arguably more likely than the latter, but it is very hard to prove.

Third, the laws primarily reveal the perspective of the state. Over-reliance on the legal evidence can thus produce a model of the Byzantine economy in which the role and significance of the government is over-emphasized, and that played by individuals or by private initiative correspondingly diminished. Our understanding of economic life in the city of Constantinople itself, for example, is enriched immeasurably by a fascinating legal text promulgated by the Emperor Leo VI in 911–12, known as the *Book of the Prefect*, or *Eparch* (*Book of the Prefect*; Dagron 2002: 407). This work sets out the regulations incumbent upon various guilds operative in the imperial capital: notaries, silk-workers, merchants, *perfumiers* and the sellers of incense, pork butchers, and bakers, to name but a few. The impression conveyed is of a highly *dirigiste* economy dominated by the demands of the state. Yet it is worth appreciating that the guilds detailed in the *Book of the Prefect* were those primarily concerned with what might reasonably be thought of as the key economic, political, and ceremonial "commanding heights" of the Middle Byzantine economy: the provisioning of the

populace of the capital; the supplying of the needs of the court; and the control of those key prestige commodities that played such an important part in international diplomacy. The text does not, and is not meant to, provide an exhaustive anatomy of the Constantinopolitan economy as a whole. Beyond the *diktat* of the law, there was plenty of scope left for the mercurial, the ambitious, and the entrepreneurial.

Literary evidence from Byzantium is plentiful, but of largely indirect use to the social and economic historian. From letter collections such as those of Bishop Synesius of Cyrene in the fifth century or Theophylaktos of Ohrid in the eleventh-to-twelfth, it is possible to distil often highly revealing information as to social attitudes or economic assumptions, while details in historical texts and chronicles can reveal individual episodes that cast much-needed light on economic conditions (the effects of a revaluation of the coinage, or the impact of a foreign invasion). The most directly relevant literary materials are the agricultural treatises or *Geoponica* that were of such great popularity among lay readers throughout Byzantine history (Teall 1971), or those much rarer texts (most famously Prokopios's *Secret History*) which engage in a direct critique of the fiscal and economic impact of imperial policy.

Perhaps rather over-used in recent years has been the testimony of the many Byzantine "saints' lives," or hagiographies, that survive in particular from the sixth and seventh centuries. While these texts reveal much of the spiritual thought-world of Byzantium, in particular the late-antique and Early Byzantine obsession with demons and demonology, they must be used with great caution when it comes to attempting to reconstruct a social reality (Brown 1971; Mango 1997; Sarris 2004). Too often treated as if they were documentary sources, containing narratives with something of the character of *reportage*, it is important to remember that these "saints' lives" were literary texts written, we must assume, with purpose for an élite audience by individuals associated with religious institutions anxious to acquire élite patronage. If, in their pages, we encounter tales of restless peasants or social tensions that could only be contained or controlled by the intervention of a holy man or a saint, that may be because that is precisely what those associated with the cult of the given holy man, or in charge of his monastery or relics, wanted an élite audience to believe. That is to say, the "saint's life" may provide better evidence for élite anxieties and fears than for the actual existence of an economically and socially autonomous peasantry, as has sometimes been claimed.

On the basis of the written evidence alone, therefore, we can only really get so far in terms of reconstructing and delineating the workings of the Byzantine economy and of Byzantine social relations. Certain aspects, regions, and periods are better served than others—in particular the "state economy," Late Antiquity, and Egypt. For much of the seventh century, during which the Early Byzantine Empire underwent a profound and far-ranging military crisis, we have very little by way of firmly provenanced or dateable written sources. It is true that historians attempting to analyze the social and economic impact of that crisis often turn to a text known as the *Farmer's Law*, which details the rules and regulations that were meant to apply to a village community, and the heading of which describes itself as "selected from the book of Justinian;" they do so, however, primarily out of desperation. Neither the date of composition nor the origin of the work can be established. Indeed the

text is not even that informative. Did the agricultural workers described in this text own the land they worked? This is a very basic question, but it is one to which the text does not actually provide a terribly clear answer. Some of the *georgoi*, or agricultural labourers, are presented as essentially sharecroppers who thus cultivated the land of another; yet others are described in Greek as the *kyrioi*, or "masters," of the land they work (*Farmer's Law*). On first glance, this would indicate that these workers at least were working their own plots, until we remember that in Justinianic law the term "master" (Latin *dominus*) could also be applied to the "fructuary" of a landholding (someone who possessed or owned or paid for the "usufructuary" right to *use* a piece of land and enjoy the proceeds from it, rather than actually possessing legal title to it). As Justinian put it, "the designation of master includes the fructuary" (*Digest* 42.5.8); so the use of the term "master" in the *Farmer's Law* is not, after all, terribly revealing since many tenants may well have had fructuary status (For usufructuary rights on the part of peasants in the Middle Byzantine period see Harvey 1989: 37 and *JGR* I: 242).

As indicated earlier, however, the gaps between the written sources are increasingly being filled by the growing sophistication of the auxiliary disciplines of archaeology and numismatics. The archaeology of the Byzantine world is currently at its most fully developed in relation to the early period up to the seventh century, and has permitted enormous advances in our understanding of settlement patterns and networks of distribution and exchange. Scholarly opinion as to the fate of Byzantine cities in the seventh century in particular has been entirely transformed in recent years by virtue of the efforts of archaeologists of late-antique urbanism (Compare Ostrogorsky 1959 to Foss 1975). Increasingly, archaeology is now casting similarly revealing light on the history of the Middle Byzantine period, as archaeologists become more adept at reconstructing the "ceramic sequence" for these years (i.e. which pottery types dates from when—broken pottery shards providing an essentially indestructible and thus invaluable archaeological marker). Likewise the testimony of the actual coinage found on Byzantine archaeological sites, be it in the form of hoarded wealth or stray finds, provides crucial evidence for the monetary conditions in which economic transactions occurred, and provide our best means of ascertaining and measuring the state of imperial public finances (Hendy 1985; Morrison 2002).

Again, however, both types of source pose their own difficulties. The archaeological record may convey a relatively clear sense of the scale and possibly even aspects of the structure of the Byzantine economy, but it is much less revealing of the social relations of production that constitute the real sinews of any economic system. Likewise, archaeology enables us to map where items or commodities or even communities were moved from and where they moved to, but it does not necessarily reveal how or why they were moved. Is an eleventh-century Byzantine glass bead found in the Ukraine evidence for trade with Byzantium, or raiding activity, or a combination of the two? The utility of numismatics, similarly, has its limitations. Money makes economic transactions far easier than they otherwise might be, but economic transactions can nevertheless occur without it: the sixth-century Byzantine author Kosmas Indikopleustes records straightforward barter-exchange between Ethiopian merchants and tribesmen from inner Africa (Laiou 2002b: 694); the Middle Byzantine *Book of*

the Prefect records merchants in Constantinople itself bartering with Bulgar traders bringing honey and linen from the North (*Book of the Prefect*: 28). The numismatic record reveals that, at its most sophisticated (i.e. in the fifth and sixth centuries), the Byzantine economy was highly monetized. But economic sophistication can nevertheless survive even in contexts where comparatively little money is in actual circulation, be it by virtue of barter or, crucially (as encountered in both the sixth-century papyri and the *Book of the Prefect*), by means of credit arrangements (Sarris 2004; *Book of the Prefect*: 15). Credit can fill the gap when cash runs short.

Cash, Credit, and Commerce

Indeed, the possible role of credit in the Byzantine economy in lieu of coinage alerts us to a key problem in the use of numismatic evidence, and especially the distribution pattern of stray coin finds when attempting to chart the degree of monetization in the Byzantine economy. One thing that is clear from the numismatic record, both in terms of stray finds and coin hoards, is that the fourth century witnessed a major (re)monetization of the Eastern provinces of the Late Roman or Early Byzantine world after the political, military, and economic disturbances that had characterized the third century, a process primarily resultant from the minting and distribution of the "Constantinian" gold *solidus*, the standard gold coin of the empire (Drinkwater 2005). In Palestine, for example, "the number of coins increased dramatically, sharply, and clearly in the fourth century … the increase in the number of coins in the fourth century is consistent throughout the country and is indicated in almost all the sites, with the exception of a few isolated cities that declined in the third century" (Safrai 1994: 404–5). Palestine is likely to provide a pretty good barometer of monetization, by virtue of the quality and extent of archaeological surveys and excavations conducted in the region. Indeed, as Safrai goes on to note, a similar trend was charted in relation to the numismatic evidence from Egypt by Johnson and West as long ago as the 1940s (Johnson and West 1949), and is also evident from Byzantine sites in Asia Minor and Syria such as Sardis, Tarsos, and Ephesos (Safrai 1994: 410–14). Likewise, from his study of the hoard evidence, Banaji has concluded that "it is clear that the government struck increasingly large quantities of gold in the course of the fourth century. Furthermore, it struck substantially more gold in the latter part of the century than in the former, and it is now possible to date the beginnings of this expansion to the final years of Constantius' reign … The 'total hoard statistic' suggests a continuous and steady progression for roughly a century … the overall impression is one of sustained monetary expansion" (Banaji 2001: 41–50).

What was true of the gold coinage in the late fourth century was true of the copper coinage in the late fifth, when there occurred the minting and extensive distribution of new denominations of the bronze currency, thus providing a more flexible small-denomination coinage that could be used for smaller transactions and at more humble social levels (Hendy 1985: 475). The imperial authorities increasingly took advantage of the new monetary conditions created by the minting of first, gold *solidi*, and then the new denominations of copper *folles*, to bring about the commutation of fiscal

payments from payment in kind to payment in coin, thereby further bolstering the more general monetization of the economy.

The growing monetization of the Early Byzantine economy in the fourth and fifth centuries offered the owners of large estates, or those who had the opportunity to acquire such estates (a very considerable number of which emerge in the papyri and are recorded in the trans-imperial legislation for this period) enormous opportunities for self-enrichment, as it facilitated a far more profound degree of estate monetization and commodification of production than had been practicable on the part of landowners in the troubled years of the third century (Sarris 2004). Consequently, as the anonymous author of the *De Rebus Bellicis* noted, in an oft-cited passage, as a result of the Emperor Constantine's coinage reforms and his creation of the gold *solidus*, "this store of gold meant that the houses of the powerful were crammed full" (Anon. *De Rebus Bell.* 2.1). However, even for the great landowners, monetization, both in its earlier and then later in its more fully-fledged phases, posed problems. First, the commutation of the fiscal demands of the state by imperial officials over the course of the fourth century and into the fifth would appear to have outstripped the actual supply of coinage, leading to localized difficulties and "queues for coin." The existence of localized shortages of coin is suggested by the extant legal sources: a series of imperial laws, from the reign of Julian (r.361–3) through to the reign of Anastasios (r.491–518), for example, express repeated concern at weight-loss among coins resultant from their over-use. Thus the *Theodosian Code* 12.7.2 describes buyers refusing to accept "lightweight or substandard" *solidi*. The *Justinianic Code* 11.11.1, dating from c.367, provides what Banaji has described as "explicit testimony … to show that weight loss was a problem, or at least perceived as one by the public at large by the 360s" (Banaji 2001: 70–71). Weight-loss among coins suggests, as indicated, a high degree of use or "velocity" on the part of the coinage, and as Mayhew has noted, "a high velocity circulation has so often in the past been characteristic of a cash-starved economy rather than of a highly liquid one" (Mayhew 1995: 70. See also Metcalf 1979: 4).

Second, as the monetization of both fiscal payments and the imperial economy more generally stabilized and reached completion, landowners, like all other taxpayers and consumers, would have needed to create or amass a private hoard or stock of coin in anticipation of expected payment. As Mayhew has again put it, "in an urban, highly monetized society, the increased expectation of using money will increase the cash balances people need to hold. Expecting to need money, people will take steps to have some ready when required" (Mayhew 1995:71).

This fact helps to account for an otherwise highly perplexing feature of the numismatic record, namely that, while the "total hoard statistic" shows a steady and then sudden increase in the number of hoarded *solidi* from the fourth century into the fifth, and then from the sixth century into the seventh, the frequency of "stray finds" on numerous sites appears to diminish dramatically from a fourth-century peak (Banaji 2001: 62–5 and 225–6; Safrai 1994: 404–14). Some commentators have interpreted this decline in the number of stray finds from the fourth century onwards as evidence for a "decrease in the number of coins" and thus a faltering of the monetary economy (Safrai 1994: 404). But a more economically informed approach

would be to suggest that the fourth-century peak in finds of non-hoarded coin signals instead a period of very high velocity of circulation of coinage occasioned by a relative shortage of currency in a perhaps rapidly (re)monetizing economy. The subsequent decrease in stray finds, alongside an increase in the "total hoard statistic," is suggestive of a more mature, fully monetized economy in which more money was being stocked by both individuals and institutions, and in which the velocity of the currency accordingly diminished (although chronic military insecurity in the early seventh century would also, naturally, have intensified the pressure to hoard). We can see this habit of building up a liquid reserve forming among elite circles in the fourth century in the description in the *De Rebus Bellicis* of how "this store of gold meant that the houses of the powerful were crammed full." By the early seventh century, the ongoing monetization of the economy meant that the practice had come to stretch far across the social spectrum to embrace even the humble holders of the copper coinage. As Banaji has remarked, "copper hoards show how … people actually felt it was worthwhile hoarding sums (in small change) whose book value in gold would not have equaled even a tenth of a *solidus*" (Banaji 2001: 67).

The desire in particular on the part of great landowners to maximize the stock of coin at their disposal would have provided them with a clear incentive to limit the amount of coinage paid over in wages and stipends to their employees: thus perhaps helping to explain an interesting feature of the papyrological evidence from Egypt: the use of credit notes or *pittakia* to reward estate employees (Sarris 2004). Indeed, the ability of great landowners to provide their potential or actual employees with credit in the context of a monetizing economy in which coinage was relatively scarce may have played an important part in fueling the expansion of great estates in the fourth century as recorded in the imperial legislation, as peasant producers handed over their plots to great landowners in return for their patronage or *patrocinium* (Sarris 2006; Sirks 2001. The same is also likely to have been true in the tenth century.).

The Byzantine Economy: Variables and Mechanisms

The determination of the Byzantine state to develop and maintain a monetized fiscal system thus played a crucial role in establishing conditions that were conducive to commercialized exchange in the Early Byzantine period, be it of agricultural goods (the main source of wealth), manufactured products, or luxury items. The state further bolstered and sustained patterns of distribution and exchange by maintaining and subsidizing networks of communication (through the maintenance of roads and the postal system) and organizing the large-scale transportation of those foodstuffs and supplies required to support the imperial army on campaign or to feed the populations of the great urban centers of the late-antique empire. As Justinian records in his Thirteenth Edict, for example, not only the population of Alexandria, but also that of Constantinople, was fed by the rich grain supply of Egypt, collected as part of the region's tax contribution and conveyed to the imperial capital by the so-called *aisia embole*, or "happy shipment." Private merchants and private commercial transac-

tions also benefited from such arrangements, travelling "piggy-back" as it were alongside these state-sponsored and state-sustained transfers, thereby minimizing their own marginal costs (Wickham 1988). The demands of the state thus catalyzed private economic activity.

A very similar point can be made with respect to the ambitions and aims of members of the Early Byzantine aristocracy: that is, the great landowners described in the Egyptian papyri and the imperial legislation, the members of the Senatorial order of Constantinople who often enjoyed access to far-flung estates, and the dominant members of the city councils of the great *metropoleis* of the East. Members of this elite maintained an essentially urban lifestyle which necessitated that they live at some remove from the agricultural properties that were the true source of their wealth. This meant that they had a vested interest in ensuring that the surplus furnished by their estates was exchanged for cash, without which an urban lifestyle was impossible (Sarris 2004). It was at least partly for this reason that members of the imperial aristocracy responded with such alacrity to the new monetary conditions of the fourth and fifth centuries as the structures of the state remonetized after the "third-century crisis." As monetization gathered momentum, it would ultimately be the case that all those who owned land beyond the level of the barest subsistence-producing plot, whether they lived in city or countryside, would find themselves in a position to derive benefit from these opportunities, and accordingly, as we have seen, there is evidence for considerable commercial drive on the part of elements of the Early Byzantine peasantry. The monetized fiscal demands of the Early Byzantine state, the core commitment to commercialized agriculture on the part of members of the empire's urbanized social elite and, increasingly, the upper echelons of the peasantry, and generally rising population levels in the fourth and fifth centuries, were the key agents of economic growth in the Early Byzantine world.

Between c.550 and 650, each one of these factors conducive to economic growth and ever more sophisticated patterns of commercialized exchange were profoundly disrupted. First, from the 540s onwards, the Byzantine Empire fell victim to repeated outbreaks of bubonic plague that were to continue through to the mid-to-late eighth century (Stathakopoulos 2004; Sarris 2002; Horden 2005). The demographic decline resultant from plague is likely to have led to a shrinking of the overall economy, and in the short to medium term, at least, to have made life much more difficult for landowners and employers as labour became scarcer. Of course, this was a situation from which both agricultural labourers and artisans could benefit considerably, as they sought to negotiate for themselves ever-more-favourable terms of employment and bolster their own *per capita* incomes, a development that could in itself be conducive to economic growth, after a fashion. But, as with the loss of potentially productive land, in aggregate terms, we should ultimately regard population decline as a significant diminution in one of the key "factors of production" of which any economy is built.

The second great disruption was in terms of the urban economy and thus the urban character of the Early Byzantine aristocracy. The cities of the empire were critically sensitive to physical insecurity or to any factors (such as foreign invasion) that disrupted the supporting structures by which the Early Byzantine state

maintained and subsidized the empire's urban infrastructure. The supporting hand of the Early Byzantine state is most visible to us through the sources in relation to the greatest cities of the East, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, which could only maintain their population levels and their monumental character by means of active imperial subvention. The same is also likely to have been true of many rather less-imposing urban foundations throughout the Early Byzantine world, however. Prokopios, for instance, tells us that grain conveyed to Constantinople that was found to be surplus to the needs of the imperial capital was compulsorily assigned to what he describes as the "cities of the East" (*Secret History* 22.14).

Different regions of the Early Byzantine world were affected by warfare, invasion, and dislocation to differing degrees and at different times, but nevertheless a reasonably clear chronology can be seen to emerge, especially from the archaeological record. With the exception of Thessalonike and a handful of coastal cities, the urban life of the Balkan peninsula appears to have been steadily undermined over the course of the mid-to-late sixth century, as Slav invasions and Avar incursions sapped the security and productivity of the rural hinterlands on which the cities depended. In the northern Balkan zone and the plains of Thrace, much damage had already been inflicted by the Goths in the late fourth century (Poulter 2004). In the case of those cities such as Athens which were to remain in Byzantine hands in spite of these invasions, attacks made by the Slavs in the 560s, 570s, and, above all the 580s, would appear to have led to widespread destruction from which the cities were not to recover. They remained inhabited, but on a much-reduced scale and at a much lower level of material culture. As for those cities which were lost to the empire, a certain degree of urban life appears to have continued into the seventh century before apparently petering out. In the Balkans, the survival of cities period would appear to have depended on the maintenance of at least a semblance of physical security and the survival of Byzantine imperial control (Mango 1980: 69–70).

In Asia Minor and Anatolia, which were to form the core of the medieval Byzantine Empire, the pattern is somewhat different. Here, the early sixth century was a period of considerable urban prosperity, with monumental works, both secular and ecclesiastical, continuing to be sponsored in the cities of the empire by local notables and the imperial authorities. In the second half of the sixth century a certain amount of physical decadence is apparent from the archaeological evidence, indicative, perhaps, of an aggregate contraction of the urban economy resultant from plague. Very little if any building work would appear to have been commissioned, but there is still evidence for prosperity of a sort. Rather, the great break here was in the early seventh century and ties in very closely with the Sasanian Empire's assaults on Byzantium's urban nerve-centers in the second and third decades of the century and then the chronic insecurity occasioned by Arab raiding activity from the 640s onwards (Foss 1975). Essentially, the Arab conquest of the much of the Early Byzantine Near East, and the extent to which the rise of Islam thereafter effectively rendered much of Anatolia and Asia Minor a near perpetual war-zone until well into the eighth century, meant that the cities of the region were simply unable to recover from the damage inflicted by the Persians, and therefore ultimately retreated to more readily defendable hard-points, or *kastra* (from the Latin *castrum* for military camp), while members of

the social élite were either wiped out or would appear to have fled deep into the countryside or to Constantinople.

Indeed, only in Constantinople did the urban economy survive at anything like a level approximating to its late-antique scale: that is to say, the contours of the ancient city were preserved, as too, it would appear, was something of the sophistication of economic transactions and levels of commercial exchange which had hitherto been conducted within its walls. There was, nevertheless, clearly a very marked decline in the city's population (Mango 1990). The Persian conquest of Egypt in 616 terminated the Egyptian grain supply on which the city was so reliant, and in 618, Heraklios had been obliged to abolish the free distribution of state bread. In 626, the Aqueduct of Valens which brought much needed water to supply the city's population was cut off by the Avars: it was not to be repaired until the eighth century, indicating that less water was now needed to supply a much reduced population. When the plague had first struck Constantinople in 542, the corpses of its victims had been thrown into the sea or were disposed of beyond its walls. When the pestilence struck again in 747, there was plenty of unoccupied space within the city itself to accommodate the dead.

The Byzantine Empire as it emerged in the eighth century had thus been to a certain extent deurbanized. Alongside this decline in the urban economy, it had also been somewhat demonetized. Gold did, however, continue to be minted by the state for its own purposes, indicating that a certain amount of taxation continued to be collected in coin (Whittow 1996: 105). So, in spite of the crisis, the state as a monetary, fiscal structure survived: the land tax continued to be collected by the state and continued to be demanded at least partly in coin. In terms of day-to-day life, however, the bronze coinage, on which the most basic transactions had come to rely, became more and more rare. Existing stocks, it would seem, continued to circulate, but necessarily wore away. Over the course of the seventh century the main copper coin, the *follis*, was reduced to what Philip Grierson described as "a miserable and repeatedly overstruck scrap of metal" (Grierson 1982: 5). The half- and quarter-*follis* were issued only intermittently: the smallest denomination of coinage, the *nummus*, completely disappeared (Grierson 1982: 5). Again, credit systems may well have filled some of the gap left by any resultant shortage of coin, dampening the economic impact of this development, but only where seigneurial, ecclesiastical, or imperial structures were solid enough to control and regulate such arrangements: in other words in those areas least disrupted by warfare around the Sea of Marmara, in Bithynia, and along parts of the coastal zone of western Asia Minor.

The monetization of the Early Byzantine economy, as we have seen, was primarily driven by the demands of the state, and was also bolstered by the ambitions of an urban-based aristocracy. By virtue of the military events of the early seventh century, members of that aristocracy would appear to have been much reduced in power, and were largely denied their traditional urban abode. The state likewise was in the grip of a severe military and fiscal crisis to which it apparently responded by a partial shift in emphasis away from primarily monetized solutions to its needs, with the army and other officials being supplied, for example, by agents termed *kommerkiarioi*, who were placed in charge of state-run warehouses (Haldon 1993: 232–44). It is in this

context that we should probably situate the attenuation of the *follis*. Faced with the Arab conquests of the mid-to-late 630s, the remnants of the East Roman field armies had been pulled back into Anatolia and Asia Minor where they had been established in new military districts called *themata*, or "themes," a process, as Haldon has argued, probably completed by the mid-640s (Haldon 1993: 216). The empire was in a state of military, administrative, and fiscal collapse, and paying and supplying this army is likely to have posed a near-insurmountable challenge. In the late 650s, however, the military pressure on Byzantium was momentarily eased by the outbreak of the first *fitna*, or civil war, within the nascent Islamic empire. Heraklios's grandson, the Emperor Constans II (r.641–68), would seem to have seized upon this opportunity to effect a major overhauling of the empire's military, defensive, and fiscal infrastructure that may be evident in the numismatic record. As Hendy has noted, the easing of Arab military pressure coincides very closely with the dramatic decline in the number of finds of copper coins at a series of sites of great military importance in Asia Minor, and the effective disappearance of copper coins from Anatolian sites until the ninth century (Hendy 1985: 640ff.). The numismatic evidence is therefore entirely consonant with the hypothesis that, in the late 650s, payments in coin to much of the Byzantine army were dramatically reduced and replaced with something else: that something else being the *stratiotika ktemata*, or "military landholdings," that we know to have come into existence at some point between the mid-seventh century and the late ninth, and which are described in the tenth-century legislation as being "of unwritten custom" (*JGR* I: 222; McGeer 2000: 68–76). With the institution of the military landholdings, the rank-and-file of the Byzantine army were given something tangible for which to fight. The material interests of a soldier-peasantry were arguably harnessed to ensure the survival of what remained of the East Roman state (Ostrogorsky 1966; Howard-Johnston 2004). But the result of this in economic terms was that in much of what remained of the empire, conditions for commerce and commercialized production and exchange necessarily deteriorated.

Nevertheless, the crucial point is that an at least partly monetized fiscal system that could serve as the basis for new economic growth in more propitious circumstances survived Byzantium's seventh-century crisis substantially intact. Thus, for example, we are told that c.694–5 the monk Theodotos, chief finance minister to the Emperor Justinian II, "tortured tax collectors and the rich men of Constantinople alike in a bid to increase state revenues" (Oikonomides 2002: 981). Likewise, it is reported that when, in 769, the Emperor Constantine V, "like 'some new Midas,' resolved to collect all the precious metals of the empire, the farmers, who did not possess gold coins, were ruined, for they were compelled to sell their harvest off cheaply so as to be able to pay their taxes, while in the cities goods were plentiful and cheap" (Nikephoros, *Short History* 160). This is a mirror image, as it were, of complaints we find recorded in the *Theodosian Code* of military officials in 393 refusing to accept their stipends in kind in the immediate aftermath of the harvest, so that they could demand payment of them in cash at a later date "at rates reflecting greater scarcity in the market" (Banaji 2001: 53 discussing *Theodosian Code* 7.4.20). In many ways the remonetizing state economy of the fourth and fifth centuries seems

to have borne very close similarity to the remonetizing state economy of the eighth and ninth.

In both situations, taxpayers were clearly heavily reliant on private patterns of exchange in order to meet their fiscal requirements, and as a result fairs, or *panegyreis*, remained an important feature of the provincial economy. In relation to Ephesos, for example, we hear of the fair that took place around the Church of St John the Theologian: the *Chronicle* of Theophanes records that in the year 794–5, the Emperor Constantine VI went to Ephesos and, after praying in the church, "remitted the custom dues of the fair [which amounted to 100 pounds of gold] in order to win the favour of the Holy Apostle" (Theophanes, *Chron*. AM 6287). Likewise, in the year 808–9 the Bulgars are recorded to have conducted a raid on the *kastron* of Strymon, when, it was claimed, the raiders were able to escape with no less than 1,100 pounds of gold (Theophanes, *Chron*. AM 6301).

Albeit on a rather more marginal scale than in Late Antiquity, therefore, a monetized public economy and associated commercial activity did survive. So too did cities. Eighth-century Ephesos on the western coast of Asia Minor may well have been a pretty miserable place compared to the classical and monumental splendour of the sixth-century city, but it still inclosed an inhabitable area of about one square kilometer, considerably more impressive than many so-called urban centers to the West at this time (Foss 1979). The distinguished Anglo-Saxonist, James Campbell, for example, has described Norwich in 1066 as "among the greatest towns of England," by that point arguably the most centralized and administratively sophisticated Christian state anywhere to Byzantium's West (Campbell 1982: 174–5). But Norwich's size in the eleventh century was pretty much on a par with that of Ephesos in the eighth. It is also clear from the *Book of the Prefect* that livestock, textiles, and other goods from throughout the empire continued to be moved considerable distances to reach the one truly great urban market that survived, Constantinople, where, even if population levels had declined, the imperial court continued to serve as a major center of consumption and thus catalyst to commercial and economic activity.

The "Circularity" of Byzantine Economic Development

If elements of the late-antique urban economy and of a monetized public economy surmounted the crisis of the seventh century substantially intact, so too, we should note, did elements of a landed aristocracy, albeit one that was much more fragmented and localized in terms of its social power and economic clout than the Early Byzantine elite of the fifth and sixth centuries. As Mango has noted, "the continued existence of large estates is proved by a number of concrete cases" (Mango 1980: 48). Although Mango himself is somewhat suspicious of the example, the *Life* of the eighth-century Byzantine, St Philaretos (d.792), records that he possessed forty-eight estates in Paphlagonia, including 12,000 sheep and 600 oxen. Another eighth-century figure, Theophanes Confessor (born in 760), is recorded as having inherited extensive estates in neighbouring Bithynia, along with many slaves and his own

private goldsmith. We also have clear evidence, both from the *Chronicle* that Theophanes composed and the Acts of the Ecumenical Council of 787, that the Church continued to own extensive estates in the eighth century, centered, as with the great estates of Late Antiquity and of the Late Byzantine period, on a directly managed demesne, or *autourgia* (Sarris 2004). The establishment and distribution of the *stratiotika ktemata*, or "military landholdings," almost certainly meant that there was a less marked polarization of wealth in eighth-century Byzantium than there was, for example, in eighth-century Francia (Toubert 2002), but that is not to say that considerable disparities of wealth did not exist, especially in those areas where military disruption was least pronounced.

But nor should we imagine that Byzantium's eastern marchlands, where warfare was most rife in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, were somehow havens of peasant autonomy. Rather here, as in parts of the Early Medieval West, local communities would appear to have responded to chronic insecurity by clustering around and seeking out the lordship of "strong men"—military lords, often of Armenian or Caucasian descent, whose knowledge of the local terrain and whose inherited martial culture enabled them both to take warfare to the enemy and to provide some measure of protection for their clients and their kin. It was members of these eastern military families who, by virtue of their extraordinary generalship and martial skill, were to spearhead the Byzantine advances deep into Arab-held territory in the tenth century, and whose claims and ambitions accordingly came to dominate imperial politics in the age of the Macedonian Emperors (Ostrogorsky 1971; Cheynet 1990).

Initially at least, the wealth of this emergent, military aristocracy (in apparent contrast to the likes of Theophanes further west) is likely to have been primarily based on animal husbandry rather than arable agriculture: crops could be easily destroyed by an invading enemy, while livestock could be led upland to safety. But the survival of an aristocracy in certain parts of the empire, and the re-emergence of a new aristocracy in other parts, is extremely significant. Taken alongside the survival of a monetized public economy, of an urban tradition, and, from the mid-eighth century, as the bubonic plague began to ebb in virulence, once more rising population levels, it meant that all the key elements were in place for a renewed era of economic growth. All that was really required was relative security. With the Abbasid revolution in the Islamic world in 750, pressure on Byzantium's eastern flank began to ease. The empire's military position began to steadily stabilize and improve until ultimately, in the early tenth century, the imperial authorities were able to go on the offensive.

With a stabilization of internal conditions within the Byzantine empire from the late eighth century onwards, we begin to see signs of a new wave of economic growth. Greater internal security within the heartlands of the empire meant that cities could once more begin to expand, and trade quicken. This in turn rendered ever more practical a greater monetization of the fiscal system. In 769, Constantine V sought to re-intensify monetary taxation, mirroring the greater monetization of the fiscal system that had taken place in the fourth century as the Early Byzantine world had emerged from the Roman Empire's third-century crisis. Just as in the fourth century the state had facilitated this greater monetization of the fiscal system—and beyond it of the economy more generally—through the minting and circulation of a new

denomination of gold coinage (the *solidus*), so too in the eighth century did the Byzantine authorities mint and make ever greater use of a new silver coin, the *miliaresion* (Morrison 2002: 929). In the ninth century, a new heavy copper *follis* was issued (Dagron 2002: 398; Laiou 2002c: 712). Military service associated with the *stratiotika ktemata* increasingly came to be commuted into a fiscal cash payment assigned to military purposes (Harvey 1989: 110–12).

Once again, it should not surprise us that, as urban life became more eligible, and as commodified production became more practicable, we begin to see signs of a new wave of accumulation of aristocratic wealth. It is this that we appear to find reflected in the so-called "land legislation" of the Macedonian Emperors: the fourteen laws issued over the course of the tenth century that sought to prohibit great landowners and office-holders described as the "powerful" (or *dynatoi*) from buying up the properties of their neighbours and social inferiors (McGeer 2000 for the laws themselves; Ostrogorsky 1966, Lemerle 1979, and Morris 1976 for differing interpretations). Some of this legislation appears to have been modeled on the template of Justinian's provincial legislation of the sixth century (McGeer 2000: 27). The legislation to which it actually bears the closest resemblance, however, is the Latin legislation on patronage, or *patrocinium*, contained in the earlier *Theodosian Code*, thus making it very unlikely indeed that the one was simply a copy of the other.

This is potentially highly significant. In the Early Byzantine period we appear to encounter two stages of evidence for aristocratic accumulation of land, with all that that entailed in terms of a growing commercialization of the economy. First, in the wake of fiscal remonetization, we have a series of laws, mostly from the fourth century, seeking to curtail the expansion of aristocratic estates (largely out of fear that the aristocrats would engage in tax evasion and thus undermine the state). Second, in the fifth and sixth centuries, the types of documentary evidence most commonly associated with great estates, such as estate accounts, become much more common in the papyrological record (Sarris 2006). A near-identical phenomenon is apparent in the Middle to Late Byzantine eras. After a period of remonetization, we encounter, in the tenth century, a sustained series of laws attempting to curtail the accumulation of land on the part of the "powerful," especially land associated with military service (McGeer 2000 for translation and commentary; Howard-Johnston 1995 for discussion of further attempts to contain aristocratic landownership). Then, from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards, we once more begin to find ever greater documentary evidence for aristocratic estates, focused, as in Late Antiquity, on a cash-cropping *autourgia*. As Laiou has concluded of the later period, "the growth of the agricultural sector took place increasingly within the framework of the estate, which experienced considerable expansion, perhaps becoming dominant in the twelfth century" (Laiou 2002d: 1151). In both Late Antiquity and the Middle Byzantine period the rise of the great estate would appear to have contributed to economic growth (Sarris 2004; Harvey 1989; Laiou 2002d: 1150).

We should note that this economic expansion continued apace in those areas that remained under Byzantine control after the military disaster of Mantzikert (1071) and the Seljuk advance. Bolstered and sustained by trade with the expanding commercial economies of Western Europe, the monetized and commodified sectors of

the Byzantine economy flourished to a degree unknown since Justinian had sat on the throne of Constantinople (Laiou 2002c: 737). The growing political and military weakness of the empire from the twelfth century onwards, however, meant that the Byzantine state economy in particular "lost its autarky"(Laiou 2002d: 1164) and was increasingly drawn into an international economic system on terms that came to be dominated and dictated by those whom the imperial authorities were desperate to regard as the empire's potential allies, but who, more often than not, were in fact its commercial rivals—above all, the Venetians, a situation for which Byzantium was ultimately to pay dear.

Byzantine "Feudalism?"

In both the early seventh and late eleventh centuries, Byzantium suffered major and largely irreversible military collapses and territorial losses. Each military collapse, it should be noted, was apparently preceded by a burgeoning of the fortunes of the imperial aristocracy. It should not surprise us, therefore, that historians have often sought to draw a connection between this intensification of aristocratic power and subsequent military developments (For the seventh-century collapse, de Ste Croix 1981; Sarris 2006; for the eleventh-century, Ostrogorsky 1966; Lemerle 1979). In particular, it has been argued that in each instance the Byzantine state was critically undermined in advance of the military challenge by the emergence of what are sometimes presented as either, for the early period, "proto-feudal" or, for the later period, "feudal" social relations (Patlagéan 1977 for the early period and Harvey 1989 for the later).

The use of the terms "feudal" or "proto-feudal" in this context is largely unhelpful, and serves more as a distraction to scholarly attention than a focus. Indeed Lemerle long ago dismissed the study of "Byzantine feudalism" as a "wild-goose chase" (Lemerle 1979: viii). The problem with the word "feudal" is that different historians mean different things by it (Wickham 2000). To the great French medievalist Marc Bloch, "feudalism" described a militarized, lord-focused society, in which the vertical ties of dependence between a lord and his followers had emerged to the fore of social relations and the lord had come to exercise powers that hitherto had been exercised by the state, a world in which the private authority of a military patron had filled the vacuum left by the disappearance or absence of central state authority (Bloch 1961). To F. L. Ganshof, and to other scholars working from a more narrowly legalistic perspective, feudalism was associated with the concept of a particular unit of real property, typically land, known as the *fief*, and the obligations (above all military) owed by a retainer to his lord in return for his possession of it. As Ganshof stated, "the fief, if not the corner-stone, was at least the single most important element in the graded system of rights over land which this type of society involved" (Ganshof 1961: xvi). This very specific model of feudalism has come under concerted criticism in recent years and has largely, and rightly, fallen out of favour among most medievalists (Reynolds 1994). To Marxists, by contrast, feudalism means (or meant) a pre-industrial society in which peasant producers were in effective ownership or

control of the subsistence-producing plots which they worked, and thus—the argument runs—if surplus was to be extracted from them by an elite, it had to be extracted by force (Hilton 1976 provides the clearest formulation).

The *fief*-focused model of feudalism certainly is of very little relevance to the Byzantinist, although the late Byzantine institution of the *pronoia* does bear some superficial similarities to the *fief* (Ostrogorsky 1954; Kazhdan 1995–6; Angold 1985: 258–9). More fruitful points of comparison can perhaps be drawn in Blochian terms, so long as one grasps that in Byzantium, the state was never emasculated to anything like the degree that it was in the West in either post-Roman or post-Carolingian conditions. Certain imperial prerogatives were indeed infringed upon by great landowners in the Early Byzantine period: we know from the imperial law codes and the papyri, for example, that it was far from uncommon for such landowners to illegally maintain both private prisons and bands of private armed retainers with which to discipline their workforce and intimidate their neighbours. Likewise, the great Eastern families of the Middle Byzantine aristocracy were profoundly militarized in culture and ethos: the heroic poetry that celebrated their exploits, such as *Digenes Akritas*, had much in common with the contemporary *chansons de gestes* of the Western *chevalerie* (Beaton and Ricks 1993; Kazhdan and Franklin 1984; Maguire 1997). But again, alongside the Middle Byzantine military aristocracy there continued to exist around the imperial court in Constantinople a bureaucratic "mandarin" class that had no parallel in the Early or even High Medieval West.

Moreover, in so far as Byzantium was a "feudal" society in Marxist terms, it was no more so than any other pre-industrial state: indeed, it is possible to argue within the *schema* of historical materialism that, at the high-water mark of aristocratic influence in Byzantium, first in the sixth century and then in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many peasants were *not* in possession or effective ownership of the "subsistence-producing plot," but rather were essentially wage labourers, as alienated and divorced from the means of production as any other rural proletariat in an agrarian capitalist context (Sarris 2005: 218).

If we simply set the word feudalism aside, is there any evidence to suggest that the rise of the Early or Middle Byzantine aristocracy had a deleterious impact on the fortunes of the Byzantine state? In straightforwardly economic terms, the answer is clearly "no." In both Late Antiquity and the Middle Byzantine period, patterns of aristocratic accumulation can be seen to have bolstered and sustained economic growth. In the early period, this was partly linked to the specifically urban character of the elite, but one does not have to reside in a city to appreciate the benefits of a cash income. The crucial point to consider is: to what extent was either the Byzantine state or the Byzantine government able to derive tangible benefit from this economic growth?

It is surely significant that in both periods we ultimately witness a disarticulation of the empire's economic fortunes and its military and political fortunes. We should also note that in both Late Antiquity and the Middle Byzantine period, the imperial authorities themselves expressed great anxiety that aristocratic expropriation of the peasantry threatened the military effectiveness of the empire by undermining the state's access to those crucial fiscal resources on which both it and the military

depended. Thus Justinian complained in 539 that tax evasion on the part of landowners in Egypt threatened the "very cohesion of our state itself" (*Justinianic Code* 13); Justin II declared in 566 that imperial bankruptcy directly affected military effectiveness (*J.Nov.* 148); in 934, Romanos Lekapenos bemoaned the fact that "the incursions of the powerful" into lands on which military service and taxation were owed undermined the very foundations of the commonwealth, "for the settlement of the population demonstrates the great benefit of its function—the contribution of taxes and the fulfillment of military obligations—which will be completely lost should the common people disappear" (*JGR* I: 205–14; McGeer 2000: 55); and Constantine VII declared that "as the head is to the body, so is the army to the state; as their condition varies, so too must the whole undergo a similar change. He who does not subject these matters to great care errs with respect to his own safety, especially if he must regard the commonwealth as his own realm of security" (*JGR* I: 222; McGeer 2000: 71).

In each instance we see emperors identifying in their laws what to them was clearly a very worrying trend of aristocratic accumulation, which again, in each instance, according to the pattern of the documentary evidence, was to continue to gather momentum until the period of military cataclysm. Certainly, the intensification of Sasanian aggression, the rise of Islam, and the advent of the Seljuks were primarily the result of developments beyond the empire's frontiers. The legislation and such documentary evidence as we have would nevertheless suggest, however, that there were internal factors, primarily resultant from processes of aristocratic enrichment, that served to limit the empire's ability to respond to these new challenges. We should be loath to reject the testimony of these sources just because it is currently fashionable to do so. That it is almost always harder to extract taxation of any sort from the wealthy is not, after all, an insight that was unique to Byzantine rulers: it was the US hotelier Leona Helmsley, not a Macedonian empress, who famously declared that "taxes are for the little people."

FURTHER READING

For the period from c.300 to 600, see J. Banaji *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity* (revised edition, Oxford, 2007) and P. Sarris *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2006). For the period from the seventh century onwards, see A. Laiou (ed.) *The Economic History of Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2002), A. Laiou and C. Morrisson *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge, 2007), and A. Harvey *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200* (Cambridge, 1989). P. Lemerle *The Agrarian History of Byzantium* (Galway, 1979) is required reading for the entirety of the period from c.300 to 1100. For trade, see M. Mundell Mango (ed.) *Byzantine Trade 4th–12th Centuries* (Farnham, 2009). For discussion of Byzantine "feudalism" and its problems, see J. Haldon *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, 1993).

CHAPTER FOUR

Byzantium = Constantinople

Paul Magdalino

The city of Constantinople was essential to the existence and identity of Byzantium. The very notion of a Byzantine Empire or a Byzantine world is derived from the fact that its center occupied the site of the ancient Greek city of Byzantion, as Byzantine writers were well aware, often referring to Constantinople by that name. This was a literary affectation; in real life the Byzantines called themselves "Romaioi" and their empire "Romania," but these names also identified them with Constantinople, the New Rome (Magdalino 2000: 151). As the capital of what was left of the Roman Empire after 476, Constantinople took over from Rome in dominating and uniting the territories of the imperial state, leaving Rome with the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Papacy. Thereafter, as the East Roman state became progressively reduced to the Balkans and Asia Minor, and then to a fraction of that area, the internal preponderance of Constantinople grew to an unprecedented degree. Most decisively, the Arab conquest of Syria and Egypt, with their strong regional cultures and economies and the great cities of Antioch and Alexandria, removed the only serious counterweights to the imperial center. Constantinople dwarfed all remaining provincial towns, including the important regional capital of Thessalonike, and it gained in stature by outlasting even Thessalonike as the only Roman city that did not fall to a foreign invader until it was captured by the forces of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

Byzantium developed a relationship between capital and country comparable to that of a centralized modern nation state. At the same time, it retained from Rome the vestigial character, outlook and mentality of an imperial city-state. The emperor was "emperor of the Romans" because he held power in the "Reigning City," as Constantinople was frequently called both at home and abroad. Provincial Byzantines were "Romaioi" because the New Rome was their "common fatherland." "Romania" was defined not by its fluctuating, shifting, and porous territorial borders, but by its secure and stable center where political and religious authority resided. Only after the capture of Constantinople in 1204, when the conquering crusaders imposed their own Latin emperor and patriarch, did provincial Byzantines and Constantinopolitans

in exile begin to find alternative homes for their political, religious, and cultural traditions, in old provincial capitals like Nicaea, Thessalonike and Trebizond, as well as in the new centers of Arta and Nymphaion (Angelov 2007; Eastmond 2004). But the recovery of Constantinople was their overriding priority, and when that was achieved in 1261, the development of a more detached sense of "national" identity slowed down until the fifteenth century, when the inevitability of the Turkish conquest provided new impetus.

The only sector of Byzantine society that attracted significant attention and investment away from Constantinople was the military, deployed largely for the defence of the provinces and frontiers (Haldon 1999). Everything else was concentrated to a high degree in the capital: power, administration, wealth, commerce, manufactures, education, entertainment, sacred objects, and sacred space, even monasticism, which in theory needed "desert" conditions to flourish (Mango and Dagron (eds) 1995; Magdalino 2007). Human and material resources poured in, and all that seemed to come out, as a late-twelfth-century bishop of Athens observed, were tax-collecting bureaucrats (Michael Choniates, quoted in Magdalino 1991: 189). Outsiders wanted to be there, and insiders never wanted to be anywhere else (Magdalino 2000). The capital was a magnet for petitioners, fugitives from justice, foreign ambassadors, merchants, captives destined for the slave-market, and young provincials of all social levels seeking careers in imperial administration or in the service of a powerful official—the peasants of ninth-century Paphlagonia in northern Asia Minor routinely castrated their sons for recruitment as palace eunuchs (Tougher 1997). Provincial aristocrats who could not afford second homes there at least cultivated close connections with the court, and the patriarchal synod was always well attended by provincial bishops who found reasons to prolong their visits to Constantinople on behalf of their sees. Exile was the worst of all fates for a Constantinopolitan (Mullett 1995). Byzantine society, from the emperor to the lowliest rural slave, was woven into Constantinople by a nexus of ties that could not be severed or extricated without making the whole fabric disintegrate. There was more to Byzantium than its capital, but without Constantinople, Byzantium would not have existed.

The Study of Constantinople

The close identification of the Byzantine world with its capital has meant that Byzantinists have rather tended to take it for granted. General histories of Byzantium usually include a section on Constantinople, but consider it mainly as the theater of politics, religion, and commerce, rather than as a discrete entity. Studies of medieval Byzantine art, literature, and religion are effectively, but only implicitly, studies of Constantinopolitan culture. Individual segments of the city such as the imperial palace, the churches and monasteries and the walls have long been studied intensively, but only recently has sustained attention been dedicated to the shape, appearance, functioning and development of the city as a whole (Mango 1986, 1990; Magdalino 1996, 2007). We still have only a hazy notion of what it looked like, and how it worked.

The systematic study of Byzantine Constantinople has not been encouraged or facilitated by the nature of the evidence, whether textual or material. The surviving textual evidence consists overwhelmingly of literature produced for readers resident in or familiar with Constantinople. Byzantines wrote sparingly on the subject of their city, and they did not write for outsiders. When they comment on Constantinople as such, they usually do so in rhetorical terms of extravagant praise or lament or (just occasionally) denunciation. References to buildings and places are made mainly in passing and tend to be allusive rather than descriptive, except for certain set-piece descriptions (*ekphraseis*) of individual constructions, including Hagia Sophia, the church of the Holy Apostles, a mosaic floor and a bath-house in the imperial palace (Hagia Sophia: Macrides and Magdalino 1988; Holy Apostles: Constantine the Rhodian and Nikolaos Mesarites; bath house: Magdalino 1988). Texts written specifically to convey information about the city's history and topography are uncommon and of very uneven quality. The most important by far, the *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae*, is also the earliest: it consists of a detailed Latin inventory of the city's 14 regions, with all its buildings, dating from c.425 (*Notitia*; Dagron 1974). Chronicles and histories contain accounts of constructions by individual emperors, prime examples being Prokopios's *Buildings*, which in Book 1 describes Justinian's additions to Constantinople in the 520s and 530s, and the long description in *Theophanes Continuatus* of the buildings erected or restored by Basil I (*Vita Basilii*: Bk 5 of *Theophanes Continuatus*).

The only Byzantine works which are in any sense local guide-books are the patriographic writings about the origins of the city and its sights. There are two main collections: the *Parastaseis* from around 800, and the more comprehensive *Patria* from the late tenth-century (*Parastaseis*: Cameron and Herrin 1984; *Patria*: Preger 1901–7). They provide invaluable evidence for the existence and location of buildings and sculptures, but their explanations for the history and the name of any given site are almost invariably invented. Other tenth-century compilations complement this information with their prescriptions on business and ritual procedure: the trade regulations of the *Book of the Prefect* name some commercial locations, the *Synaxarion* and *Typikon* of the Great Church list the churches where religious feasts were celebrated, and the *Book of Ceremonies*, besides being the most important source for the layout of the Great Palace, also details the emperor's itineraries to outlying venues (*Book of the Prefect; Synaxarion*: Delehaye 1902; *Typikon*: Mateos 1962–3; Constantine VII, *Book of Ceremonies*: Vogt 1935–40). One may also mention the *Greek Anthology*, which contains references to buildings and monuments in the city such as the church of St Polyeuktos (*Greek Anthology*, 1, 10).

The tenth-century compilations do at least, in their selective way, map the city as a whole. There is nothing comparable for later periods. However, from the twelfth century onwards, the uneven literary evidence can be supplemented by a few documents delineating the properties ceded to privileged monasteries and to the Italian communes of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa that sought trading-quarters for their citizens (Maltezou 1995; Magdalino 1996; Mundell Mango 2000). These documents were drafted with the exactitude used in fiscal assessments and notarial contracts, and therefore give clear, precise, and concrete information about the extent and quality

of the real estate involved. The Italian material is particularly valuable because it concerns the densely built-up port area of the Golden Horn. Unfortunately, the records exist only because their beneficiaries were willing and able to preserve them. They give a tantalizing glimpse of the quality and quantity of documentation that has been lost because so many other beneficiaries disappeared with their entire archives. As for the central government records, which must have been copious, all that has survived are two volumes of the patriarchal register from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These copies of rulings issued by the tribunal of the Great Church shed much light on the society of late Byzantine Constantinople, and often refer to buildings and locations, but never in any descriptive detail.

For information and impressions that do not assume familiarity with Constantinople, we have to turn to the writings of foreign visitors. Apart from a seventh-century Chinese diplomat, and a twelfth-century Spanish rabbi (Schreiner 1989; Adler 1907), the writers in question were Arabs, Latin Westerners, and Russians, and their visits (or those of their informants) fell mainly in the tenth to fifteenth centuries (various contributions to Macrides 2002a; Magdalino 2007, 3–6). All were impressed by the city's enormous wealth. The Arab visitors of the ninth to eleventh centuries were mostly interested in the secular sights, while the Russian pilgrims of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries were only interested in churches and relics (Harun-ibn-Yahya 1932; *Russian Travelers*). The Westerners who came throughout the Middle Ages as envoys and pilgrims, and then from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries as Crusaders, were interested by both profane and religious attractions, while also noting the city's seamy side. The Crusaders were particularly moved by their own achievement in burning, sacking, and conquering Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade (Robert de Clari). To convey the scale of the phenomenon, they produced unique, if suspect, numbers for the city's population, and made vivid comparisons with their own countries.

The Fourth Crusade was only the most spectacular of the catastrophes that have torn away at the material fabric of Byzantine Constantinople. Both as the Byzantine and Ottoman capital, and as the modern Turkish Istanbul, the city has had more than its fair share of earthquakes, fires and mob rampage. Even more destructive in the long run than any catastrophe has been the continuous habitation of the site. As in medieval Rome, the recycling of marble columns, capitals, lintels and other slabs was common practice long before the Ottoman conquest. In the early fourteenth century, Theodore Metochites, the emperor's chief minister, boasted that Constantinople was able to supply the construction needs of many of its neighbors; when he fell from office and his palace was demolished, its fine marble paving was sent as a diplomatic gift present to the Tartar khan of the Golden Horde (Nikephoros Gregoras, 458; Magdalino 2010). Since 1453, the largely Muslim population has lacked any ideological—or, until recently, financial—incentive to preserve the remains of the Christian past, and Ottoman sultans and pashas razed many Byzantine structures in the process of building their palaces, mosques and bazaars. The appearance of some important structures, like the fifth-century column of Arkadios and the eleventh-century monastery of the Peribleptos, is known only because Western travellers to the Ottoman capital made accurate drawings and left detailed descriptions (Column: *Archaeologia* 1922 and Mango 1965; Peribleptos: Mango 1992).

A few Byzantine constructions still dot the urban landscape of Istanbul: the city walls (Van Millingen 1899; Asutay-Effenberger 2007), the remains of some columns and monumental structures, the depressions left by three open reservoirs, and a small number of church buildings that survived more or less intact because they were converted into mosques. They form a representative selection, and among them is the outstanding architectural feature of Byzantine Constantinople, the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, but they are too few, too scattered and too isolated to allow a clear reconstruction of the ensemble into which they fitted, especially now that the churches have lost their original annexes (Hagia Sophia: Mainstone 1988; Myrelaion/Bodrum Camii: Striker 1981; Kalenderhane Camii: Striker and Kuban 1997). Despite rapid urban development in the twentieth century, much still remains below the built-up surface of the modern city, including numerous vaulted cisterns, some huge. Yet opportunities for archaeological access and rescue are limited and sporadic. When excavations occur, they produce unexpected discoveries as well as predictable recoveries of sites identified from texts. This greatly enriches our knowledge of the complex history of the Byzantine built environment, but ultimately reveals how much more there is to learn, and may never be uncovered.

The scholarly investigation of Constantinople began just before the Ottoman conquest with the Renaissance discovery of classical antiquity. It was with the antiquarian eyes of Renaissance humanism that Demetrios Chrysoloras, a native scholar who had taught in Florence, compared the ancient monuments of the Old and New Rome, and that two Italian merchants, Ciriaco d'Ancona and Cristoforo Buondelmonti, recorded the ancient inscriptions and other curiosities in several cities of the Aegean area including the Byzantine capital. Ciriaco left sketches of Hagia Sophia and the imperial column and statue outside the church (Ciricaco, Travels). However, as a humanist, he found Athens and Cyzicus more rewarding. Study of Byzantine Constantinople in its own right had to wait for another century, when the Ottoman transformation of the city was well under way, and the French king Francis I, in the context of his political alliance with the sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, sent a fact-finding mission to the East that included the polymath humanist Pierre Gilles. Gilles spent three years of intense research in the Ottoman capital. His *Antiquities of Constantinople*, published posthumously in 1561, is an outstanding work of historical geography, which as an attempt to relate the written sources to the physical evidence of the site remained unsurpassed until the twentieth century (Pierre Gilles tr. Bull 1729, repr. 1988). In the seventeenth century, Charles du Cange, the founding father of Byzantine studies who never visited Constantinople, used the book as the basis for his own *Constantinopolis Christiana*, and it remained such an authoritative guide to the city's pre-Ottoman history that an English translation was published in 1729 (Spieser 2000). Later travellers to Turkey did not attempt to continue Gilles' work; a few, as we have seen, recorded specific Byzantine monuments, but most, like the fifteenth-century Italian, reserved their antiquarian interest for more ancient artifacts and for sites outside Constantinople, preferring otherwise to entertain their readers with tales of the exotic mores of the Sultan's court. This orientalism long affected the way Europeans perceived Byzantium as well as the Ottoman Empire, and contributed to their reluctance to

give pre-Ottoman Constantinople the kind of archaeological attention that they were increasingly devoting to classical sites.

Things changed very quickly in a chain of developments from the mid-nineteenth century: the rapid westernization of the Ottoman Empire in response to its deepening political malaise; the influx of Western archaeologists in the wake of competing Western investors, embassies, and missionaries; a romantically driven interest in the Middle Ages, and by extension Byzantium, all over western Europe; the growing lure of the Byzantine heritage for the emergent modern Greek nation and for the increasingly large, affluent and well-educated Greek community of Constantinople; the determination of Tsarist Russia that the Orthodox Slavs should not miss out on their own share of that heritage; the rise of art history as an academic discipline, with the perception of Byzantium as a key bridge in the transmission of architectural and iconographical forms (Mango 1965; Cormack and Jeffreys (eds) 2000). Investigation of Byzantine Constantinople was facilitated by the Allied occupation after the First World War: the remains of the Mangana palace and monastery were excavated thanks to the stationing of French troops on the site (Demangel and Mamboury 1939). Turkish nationalism did not initially get in the way; indeed, the first three decades of the new Turkish republic, with its capital at Ankara, were the best time for excavation work in twentieth-century Istanbul. Sections of the Hippodrome and adjacent buildings, the imperial palace, and the Myrelaion complex (Bodrum Camii) were all dug up in the period 1924–54 (Mango 1990; Hippodrome: imperial palace: Talbot Rice; Myrelaion: Talbot Rice 1933).

Among the scholars from many countries who advanced the study of Byzantine Constantinople in the century of transition from Ottoman to modern Turkey, it is appropriate to single out those who were not there in a professional academic capacity. The investigators of the Great Palace and Hagia Sophia, George Paspatis and Efthymios Antoniadis, were Greek natives. The American Alexander Van Millingen, who wrote books on the Byzantine churches and city walls, and the Swiss Ernest Mamboury, who was involved in most local archaeological work between 1914 and 1953 and left a voluminous archive, were teachers in local Western-type schools. The most comprehensive works on the topography and the churches of Constantinople were produced by a French priest, Father Raymond Janin, belonging to a community of Augustinian Assumptionists that had been set up on the eastern side of the Bosphoros to win local Christians to Catholicism.

Janin's topographical surveys, along with the articles on the Great Palace and the Hippodrome by his prolific contemporary Rodolphe Guilland, were a milestone in the study of Constantinople (Janin 1964, 1969; Guilland 1969). They were, however, far from definitive, and problems of topography, matching textual references with physical locations, have continued to preoccupy scholarship on the city. New work on the written sources, like George Majeska's edition of the Russian pilgrim accounts and Albrecht Berger's critical examination of the *Patria*, has turned largely on mapping the buildings and locations they name (*Russian Travelers*; Berger 1988). Archaeological investigation has also given high priority to the correct identification of sites: the exciting material remains uncovered at the Saraçhane and Kalendarhane are much more meaningful in the light of the inscriptions proving that these were

respectively the churches of St Polyeuktos and the Virgin Kyriotissa (Harrison 1989; Striker 1997). It is possible to write much of the history of Constantinople without going into topographical issues; Gilbert Dagron has done so with great success in his work on the beginnings, self-image, rituals, religious culture, and commercial economy of the city (Dagron 1974, 1984, 2002). Yet questions of location, dating and physical appearance have been central to the method and the concerns of other recent historians, notably Cyril Mango, who has led the shift in focus away from urban topography to urban development (Mango 1990; see also the introduction to Magdalino 2007). One only has to compare the differences in the city plans that accompany recent publications to appreciate how much remains hypothetical.

Writing the urban history of Byzantine Constantinople is a long and complex forensic process; a piecing together of clues from innumerable, disparate, and often highly unpromising scraps and traces, each of which has to be critically evaluated and contextualized. Every stage of the city's long evolution has to be looked at separately, by getting behind assumptions based on later sources and later realities. Written evidence can almost never be discarded, but it has to be treated with caution, not only when it evokes the city's or a monument's distant past, but also when it gives the impression that a building has had no previous existence: do new names mean new foundations? The collation of textual sources with each other always needs refreshing. The collation of written evidence with material remains has continually to be rethought in the light of new finds, such as the vaulted Palace substructures recently uncovered southeast of Hagia Sophia, and the currently (in 2009) ongoing excavation of the former harbor of Theodosios at Yenikapi which has uncovered not only important remains of the city's infrastructure, but also several Byzantine shipwrecks. With new discoveries has come the new analysis of previously excavated but incompletely published material, such as glass, pottery, and most importantly for the early buildings of Constantinople, brick-stamps (Bardill 2004). Even long-familiar sculptures can yield important new clues: an obelisk observed by Pierre Gilles in the enclosure of the Sultan's palace has been used to locate the square known as the Strategion, and re-examination of an obelisk base found in 1930 by the Laleli Mosque has led to significant new conclusions about the location, appearance, and function of the Constantinopolitan Capitol (Mango 2000; Feissel 2003). Finally, the evidence for the urban development of Constantinople makes most sense when it is not studied in geographical isolation, but related to other sites both in the city's hinterland and beyond. An ongoing investigation into the fortifications and aqueduct networks of the Thracian peninsula promises not only to reveal much about the outer reaches of the capital's defence and water supply system, but also to have implications for understanding of the deployment of water channels and storage within the walls, as well as the siting of the buildings they served (Crow, Bardill, and Bayliss 2008). The excavation of monastic sites in the hinterland can help in visualizing the entire units to which the surviving monastery churches in Istanbul once belonged. The investigation of Late Roman sites such as Ephesos and Aphrodisias in Asia Minor shows that provincial cities with a less continuous history of habitation can reveal much about the institutional life as well as the architectural language of the urban environment that Constantinople represented on a grander scale (Foss 1979; Roueché 1989).

The Last Ancient Polis

Constantinople was the last great urban foundation of the ancient world, and very much a creation of the urban culture of antiquity. Founding a city was the supreme act of beneficence that a ruler could perform to display his power and win lasting renown. When the emperor Constantine chose, in 324, to upgrade and expand the ancient Greek colony of Byzantion into a vast megalopolis bearing his name, he was following a long tradition of historical and mythological precedents that included the two great cities of the Greek east: Alexandria, the creation of Alexander the Great; and Antioch, founded by Alexander's general Seleucus. Only in its vast scale and its singular site on a long, hilly promontory was the new foundation, formally inaugurated on May 11, 330, untypical of late antique urban planning. Constantine left old Byzantion largely intact at the tip of the peninsula, complete with its acropolis and agora, and laid out his new city to the south and west, around a series of grandiose spaces lined by covered porticoes, and dominated by colossal sculptured monuments. The extension began to the south of the ancient agora, at the point where the Milion, a four-arched vaulted Tetrapylon, marked the terminal milestone of the road from Rome and Thessalonica. Northwest of the Milion, Constantine laid out the porticoed Royal Courtyard (Basilike), and to the southeast, a porticoed square, the Augustaion. Beyond the Augustaion came a large public bath, the Zeuxippos, and the imperial palace, both flanked to the northwest by the massive structure of the Hippodrome, or circus for chariot racing. West from the Milion, past the northern end of the Hippodrome, ran the porticoed Central Avenue (Mese), as far as the circular Forum of Constantine that was the focal point of the new imperial city. Surrounded by colonnades, with a Senate House on its north side, and two monumental gateways to the east and west, the Forum was dominated by a central porphyry column bearing a statue that represented Constantine. West of the Forum, the Mese continued to two monumental structures at important road junctions: a Tetrapylon from where a porticoed street ran north; and the Capitol, an ensemble of temples, terraces, and statuary at the point where the Mese divided. Beside the northern branch, Constantine built his mausoleum in the form of a rotunda, surrounded by a large porticoed courtyard with residential and recreational facilities. It lay just inside the new land wall that was built across the peninsula from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmara, inclosing an area four times as large as ancient Byzantion. These were just the main constructions that can be reliably attributed to Constantine (Mango 1986; Bardill 2004; Bassett 2004).

For a century and more after 330, Constantinople continued to develop quite literally along the lines set down by its founder. This was partly a matter of filling in the frame he had constructed, and partly a process of extending it further to accommodate a population increase, perhaps greater than he had anticipated, that received particular impetus when Theodosios I (r.379–95) made Constantinople his permanent residence, followed by his son Arkadios (r.395–409), his grandson Theodosios II (r.409–50), and all subsequent emperors (Bardill 2004: 28–39). The infrastructure of water supply, food provisioning and defence were improved by massive engineering

projects; private housing proliferated, from low-cost tenements to the sumptuous palaces of imperial relatives and ministers; more public baths were built; and the monumental nodes of the Constantinian city were enriched and multiplied by the Theodosian emperors with lavish constructions advertising their victories over internal enemies. Theodosios I laid out a huge square Forum to the west of Constantine's, complete with triumphal arch and historiated triumphal column, and Arkadios created a similar complex to the west of the Capitol. Theodosios also built a triumphal arch, the future Golden Gate, outside the city to the southwest, and added monuments to two other open spaces already developed by Constantine: the Hippodrome; and the Strategion, the ancient agora of Byzantion (Bardill 2004:28-31).

All the elements of this construction programme consciously reproduced, in varying degrees of enlargement or adaptation, standard ornamental and functional units of the Late Roman city. The main single model was Rome itself, mediated in part by the earlier "Romes from Rome" that Diocletian and his colleagues of the Tetrarchy had established at Trier, Milan, Sirmium, Thessalonike, Heraklea in Thrace, Nikomedia, and Antioch. These recent centers of devolved Roman government, most of which Constantine had visited, appear to have shared one distinctive feature of imperial Rome that was later replicated in Constantinople: the close association of the imperial palace with the circus. Diocletian's Nikomedia, only 60 miles to the east of the Bosphoros, was a likely source of inspiration. Yet Constantinople was a more ambitious project than any of the Tetrarchic capitals. Its dimensions, its imperial forum, its Capitol, and above all its Senate House, marked it out from the start as a deliberate imitation of Rome. Its status as New Rome, largely implicit for the first 50 years of its existence, was made explicit at the church Council of Constantinople (381), and pointedly emphasized by the building programme of Theodosios I, whose forum with its historiated column clearly recalled Trajan's forum and column in Rome. What Constantinople took from the cities of Greece and Asia Minor, and perhaps further east, was not its unique composition so much as a common urban vocabulary of porticoed streets, semicircular colonnades, and vaulted tetrapyla. It also took many of the statues that crowded its public spaces: in St Jerome's words, "Constantinople was enriched by the nudity of almost every other city."

Constantinople was above all a huge imposition on the urban world of the eastern Mediterranean, a consumer of resources on the same vast scale as Rome, but which mushroomed into existence in a much shorter time, arousing the resentment that Jerome's remark reflects. The new capital was not only built, decorated, and maintained at the expense of other cities; it also recruited members of their civic elites into the expanding imperial bureaucracy. Much of the surplus grain production of Egypt was shipped to feed it, and this in turn prompted the construction of big new port installations, the harbors of Julian and Theodosios on the south coast (Teall 1959; Magdalino 2001). The defence and water supply of Constantinople required an unprecedented building program (Crow, Bardill, and Bayliss 2008). To protect the city, which lay perilously close to the Danube frontier, from Goths and Huns, the government of Theodosios II provided it with a new set of walls that enlarged the fortified area, while at some point in the fifth century work began on an outer line of defence, the Long Walls of Thrace, stretching from the Black Sea to

the Sea of Marmara some 60 km to the west. The defence system was linked to the water supply, which because of the geomorphology of the Thracian peninsula and the technical impossibility of piping water from Asia, necessarily involved tapping sources lying far to the west of the city as well as in its immediate hinterland. The ancient short-distance aqueduct from the Belgrade forest was supplemented by a long-distance network of channels, tunnels, and bridges over 250 km long (120 km as the crow flies). Since the aqueduct system was vulnerable to invaders and earthquakes, extensive provision was made for water storage within the walls, both in large open-air reservoirs and in vaulted underground cisterns.

It was mainly in the scale of its consumption, infrastructure, and monumental décor that Constantinople differed from earlier ancient cities. There was, however, one qualitative difference: as the foundation of the first Christian emperor, Constantinople was the first city that made public provision for Christian worship from the moment of its inauguration, which happened on the feast day of the local martyr, St Mokios. The Christian presence was not initially very obtrusive: as in Rome, Constantine built an extramural basilica to the martyr and a cathedral church in the city center, but apparently did not close the pagan temples on the acropolis of Byzantium, and may even have added new ones at the Royal Courtyard and the Capitol. Thereafter the balance steadily changed as the pagan population dwindled, emperors and empresses became more interested in collecting holy relics than profane statues, and the ever-wealthier church took an ever-more-prominent role in public life with its rituals, moral preaching, doctrinal disputes, and charitable work. Even so, the *Notitia* of c.425 shows that a full century after the foundation, and a full generation after the closing of the pagan temples, there were still only 14 churches and no monasteries within the city. It was not until the second half of the fifth century that churches began to dominate the urban landscape, and possibly not until still later that they and their annexes began to accommodate certain amenities such as baths, schools, and notaries' offices. By the sixth century, churches and church-run welfare institutions—hospitals, old-age homes, and the Orphanage—were the primary objects of imperial benefaction: when the emperor Justinian (527–65) rebuilt the city center after its devastation by fire in the Nika Riot of 532, he devoted his energy and enormous resources to reconstructing the cathedral church of Hagia Sophia on a vast scale and with a totally novel design (Mainstone 1988). Yet neither Justinian nor his sixth-century successors neglected the traditional, monumental aspect of urban life; while churches and monasteries proliferated, commemorative statues and columns continued to go up, and luxurious Roman-style baths continued to function alongside the small church-owned establishments where pious confraternities met to bathe and feed the poor. The city's populace, represented by the turbulent Blue and Green factions, continued to riot for bread and circuses.

The Greatest Christian City of the Middle Ages

Like all other Mediterranean cities, Constantinople went into a sharp decline from the late sixth century through the combined effects of plague, foreign invasion, and

the drastic reduction of long-distance trade. In one respect it was the hardest hit, since it was the most heavily dependent on the resources of empire, notably Egyptian grain. In the century from the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641 to the last devastating outbreak of plague in 747, almost no building work is recorded in the city, and the population may have fallen by as much as 90% from its peak of around 400,000 under Justinian (Magdalino 1996, 2007). Yet Constantinople had two unique advantages: it was not captured by invaders, and it never lost its original function as the capital of a Christian Roman state. It was thus poised to profit fully from the more favorable geopolitical conditions that prevailed after 750, and it continued to revive and expand until the Crusader conquest of 1204, which it attracted precisely because it was so large and wealthy. Its population had returned to something like its sixth-century level and it dwarfed all centers in western Europe; Cairo and Baghdad were the only other cities in the same league.

Constantinople was thus the greatest Christian city of the Middle Ages. Was it, however, the archetypical or quintessential medieval city, or was it an anomalous survival of ancient urbanism? The answer to this question is largely a matter of emphasis and definition. If one defines the ancient city in terms of monumental décor and civic amenities, one is bound to see it as decisive that Constantinople's great public baths and its "university" at the Capitol were not maintained, while the public monuments, though selectively repaired, were not added to, and their original function was widely ignored, with statues being imagined to have demonic and magical properties. A twelfth-century Western visitor, Odo of Deuil, who came in 1147 on the Second Crusade, evokes an environment of sharp, disordered contrasts between splendor and squalor that seems closer to medieval Paris or London than to ancient Athens or Rome. On the one hand, there were beautiful palaces and churches, but on the other, "The city is rather squalid and smelly and many places are afflicted with perpetual darkness. The rich build their houses so as to overhang the streets and leave these dark and dirty places for travellers and for the poor. There murder and robberies occur, as well as other sordid crimes which love the dark. Life in this city is lawless, since it has as many lords as it has rich men and almost as many thieves as poor men" (Odo of Deuil). However, in terms of the economic, political, and religious habitat, it is not easy to pinpoint the fundamental difference between the sixth-century and the twelfth-century city. The physical and institutional structures that ensured its functioning were largely in place by 600. There were many more monasteries in the medieval city, and the architectural forms of both churches and residential buildings had changed, with more focus on the interiors of rooms and courtyards than on external facades. Yet the important medieval units often occupied the sites and used the materials, if not the actual structures, of older buildings. People still shopped, worshipped, dealt with authority, washed, conducted their legal transactions, and sought entertainment within an urban space that was still defined and serviced by constructions of the first three centuries of its existence.

The main dislocations and relocations seem to have occurred in the city's maritime trade. In the mid-sixth century, the bulk of traffic shifted from the city's northern ports on the Golden Horn to its southern harbors on the Sea of Marmara (Propontis) (Magdalino 1995). However, the Golden Horn neighborhoods had regained their

importance by the end of the eleventh century, when Italian merchants were trading there, and the communes of the cities from which they came began to seek trade concessions, including grants of property in the area corresponding to the modern districts of Eminönü and Sirkeci. Venice, followed by Pisa, Amalfi, and Genoa, thus acquired houses and shops inside the sea walls and wharfs and jetties on the waterfront. By the late thirteenth century, the Golden Horn was clearly the commercial hub of Constantinople. This came about through three factors:

1 the development of the Blachernae district as the main residence of the imperial court and the aristocracy;
2 Venetian investment in the Golden Horn area during the period of Latin occupation (1204–61);
3 Genoa's acquisition by treaty of Pera, the urban area on the north side of the inlet.

This last factor was decisive for the development of the city in the last two centuries of Byzantium and in the Ottoman period. Genoese Pera drew business away from imperial Constantinople by imposing lower taxes on commerce; after 1453, it was the nucleus of the European quarter of the Ottoman city, where the Western embassies were located, and where, towards the end of the Ottoman period, the influx of Western capital decisively shaped the commercial and cultural center of modern Istanbul.

FURTHER READING

Mango 1985 looks at the physical development of Constantinople between the fourth and seventh centuries; Magdalino 1996 looks at the later period in similar terms. This study, originally in French, is translated in Magdalino 2007. Mango 1993 and Magdalino 2007 are both collections of essays by these scholars on the city. Bassett 2004 examines the early period and its remains; Bardill 2004 is important for its discussion and redating of many significant buildings on the basis of brickstamps. Mango and Dagron 1995, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 2000, Necipoğlu 2001 are the proceedings of conferences devoted to Constantinople and its environs. Freely and Çakmak 2004 is a survey of Byzantine remains in Istanbul.

CHAPTER FIVE

Provinces and Capital

Catherine Holmes

Byzantine studies is a fascinating and yet bewildering field of study, so broad are its geographical and chronological parameters and so great the number of disciplines through which it can be approached. Yet within this spectrum of uncertainty, Byzantinists have always been able to rely on one important constant: that for most of its history the Byzantine Empire had a single political, administrative, religious, and cultural center at Constantinople. Certainly this is a constant which can be nuanced at the chronological edges. However, the centrality of Constantinople to Byzantium between the reign of Theodosios I and the Fourth Crusade of 1204 has rarely been doubted. But this scholarly certainty about the importance of the capital city has some unfortunate side effects, not least a paucity of detailed studies of individual Byzantine provinces and a curious lack of interest in relationships between Constantinople and the localities. As a result the provinces have often been subjected to rather generalized and negative stereotyping. Most notably they have been seen as Constantinople's poor relations, the objects of ruthless exploitation by the imperial fisc, as well as cultural backwaters, where any perceptible vibrancy is explicable only in terms of metropolitan influence. In this context, inhabitants of the localities have all too often been typified as disgruntled dissidents eager to escape the yoke of the imperial center rather than as participants in a wider imperial project; this argument is often put with particular force where marked cultural, ethnic, or religious differences can be detected beween center and provinces.

This chapter does not set out to rectify all shortcomings in the state of research into the Byzantine provinces. It does not, therefore, present a series of potted histories of the Byzantine localities; nor does it analyze on a case-by-case basis the relationship between particular Byzantine territories and Constantinople. Instead it examines how problems in the evidence base and in the current practices within Byzantine studies have made writing provincial history so difficult, while at the same time considering why center–periphery relations have often been cast in a negative light. I go on to appraise recent revisionist arguments which have downplayed the

extent of malign Constantinopolitan interference in the lives of the provinces. However, the chapter argues for more than a simple recalibration of the balance of power between Constantinople and its provinces. Instead it questions whether center–periphery relationships in Byzantium were necessarily purely binary, and asks whether alternative political, religious and cultural centers to Constantinople existed. Nevertheless, while the chapter urges demolition of unhelpful stereotypes, it eventually returns to the notion that Constantinople was indeed Byzantium's most meaningful center for more than a thousand years. This was less because of the capital's iron fist, or indeed its velvet glove, and more because the city remained central to the interests and ideals of governing élites for more than a millennium.

Understanding the Byzantine Provinces: Methods and Sources

One of the reasons why it is so difficult to discuss relations between Constantinople and the localities is because of the current state of research into the history of the Byzantine provinces. It is not so much that knowledge about the provinces is entirely lacking, but instead that this knowledge often exists in forms which tell us little about a province's overall history. Thus, there is a wealth of material available in extremely well-researched reference works such as the *Tabulae Imperii Byzantini* (a series of detailed historical geographies of many of the Byzantine provinces in Anatolia, the Aegean, and the Balkans), as well as in extensive compendia of monuments and sites. However, evidence is usually presented in such works in an alphabeticized site-by-site format. While this organizational method is useful for reference purposes, it precludes rounded interpretations of a province's history and the engagement of that province with the imperial center. A similar problem often arises with Byzantine archaeology. That is to say, while it is certainly true that the history of the Byzantine provinces can only be enriched by archaeology, many discoveries often remain embedded in dig- or survey-reports or within specialist journal articles.

This is not to argue, of course, that there are no Byzantine provincial histories. Notable book-length studies have been published on Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia in the Early Byzantine period, while from the later period there are substantial treatments of the Byzantine states of Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epiros, as well as of erstwhile Byzantine territories such as Venetian Crete. Moreover, sophisticated analysis is sometimes available for those provinces with a particularly rich record of extant visual and material culture; this is particularly true of Cappadocia in central Asia Minor, where a plethora of rock-cut churches, monasteries, and other monuments, many with painted decoration and most dating from the Middle Byzantine centuries, have attracted a great deal of attention (Jerphanion 1925–42; Restle 1967; Rodley 1985). Yet even here, attempts to set the visual record within the wider social, economic, and political history of Cappadocia have been rare (Thierry and Thierry 1963; Thierry 1994; Ousterhout 2005). Moreover, while the relationship between Constantinople and the Cappadocian locality has at an art historical level been assessed at length, this discussion has rarely explored the broader social, economic, and political connections between center and periphery (Cormack 1967; Wharton 1986). And indeed beyond

Cappadocia, it is only for the later Byzantine period that more broadly contextualized treatments of provincial material culture are available (for example, Eastmond 2004).

To some extent, the relative dearth of detailed and rounded studies of particular provinces and their relationship to Constantinople reflects the dominance traditionally accorded by Byzantinists to the empire's capital. However, it also reflects the practical realities of current research and the immense complexity and challenge of understanding the Byzantine provinces. That is to say, there are relatively few Byzantinists to work on an empire which lasted for more than a thousand years and which for large periods of its history governed substantial territories in southern Europe, western Asia, and even North Africa. Moreover, while these territories were at times substantial, they were also very different in terms of landscape, climate, economy, and social organization. In addition to the problems of chronological scale and topographical diversity, historians of the Byzantine provinces also face a particularly difficult evidence base. Thus, in contrast to the medieval West, Byzantine historians have far fewer documentary sources (charters, wills, inventories, account books, letters) to hand, especially in the centuries before 1200. Indeed, it is striking that it is only in those places where (and when) such documentary sources survive that modern scholars tend to make the most substantial strides in writing provincial history. This is true of Byzantine Egypt, where numerous documentary papyri and ostraka make it possible to reconstruct patterns of economic exploitation, local social bonds, religious and educational practices, and political connections between locality and center (Sarris 2006, 8–9). Despite being some of the most distant provinces from the Contantinopolitan center, the southern Italian regions of Calabria and Apulia are rather better understood than many other Byzantine localities, above all because of a relative wealth of archive documents (von Falkenhausen 1967 and 1984; Guillou 1974a and b; Martin 1993). Meanwhile, more is known about the economy, society, and government of Macedonia than many other provinces of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods because of the survival of archive documents from Mount Athos. Not only are the documents themselves rich sources of information about local society and links to the capital, they also help to provide contexts within which other sources can make greater sense, including the monasteries' visual record and important hagiographical materials connected to the Holy Mountain (Lefort 2006; Morris 1986).

This is not to suggest, of course, that an absence of documentary sources precludes the writing of provincial history. Alternative sources and techniques can be helpful. Surface survey has proved very enlightening in the study of the landscape and settlement history of Early Byzantine Macedonia and the Middle Byzantine Maiander valley (Dunn 1994; Barnes and Whittow 1993 and 1994). Another important resource, particularly for historians of the Middle Byzantine period, is lead seals, which often include information about the names, titles, and offices of provincial administrators. While the discipline of sigillography is still somewhat embryonic, more concerned with cataloging and creating taxonomies than offering broader interpretations, nevertheless recent studies of Byzantium's frontier regions in the tenth to twelfth centuries have made substantial use of the sigillographical record to establish the contours of local government; more exciting, but rarer, are studies which examine

the circulation of lead seals within particular regions and between Constantinople and the localities. While relatively underdeveloped currently, it is this line of inquiry which seems to hold the most promise for understanding the scale and nature of communication between the empire's capital, its provincial centers, and outlying districts, particularly at an administrative level.

Also extremely promising but fraught with methodological difficulties are saints' lives, many of which relate to individuals and communities in the Byzantine provinces. A particularly well-known example in this sense is the *Life* of St Luke of Stiris, which sheds light on local society in central Greece and on connections with Constantinople in the mid- to later tenth century, particularly if it is read in the context of the surviving buildings and decorative programs in St Luke's own monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phokis (Connor 1991; Luke of Stiris: Connor and Connor 1994). Comparable examples include the *Life* of St Theoktiste of Lesbos, a female saint from the ninth century whose life was written down in the early tenth century by a Constantinopolitan court official called Niketas *magistros*, and whose experience seems to illuminate the economy and society of the Byzantine island-world during the ninth and early tenth centuries (see also the account of Bourbouhakis and Nilsson in this volume). It is worth pausing briefly to show how far this is so, but also the extent to which the picture it presents of provincial life is complicated by literary and compositional considerations.

According to Niketas, while he was travelling with an imperial delegation to the island of Crete, then in Muslim hands, his ship was blown off course and he had to put into the harbor at Paros, in the Cyclades archipelago. While in Paros, Niketas and his companions prayed in the large church which they could see from the harbor—almost certainly the heavily restored sixth-century church that one can still visit today. The church impressed Niketas for it was "built in perfect symmetry on all sides it was supported by numerous columns of royal marble … The marble was so fine as to give the impression that the wall was dressed in cloth of fine linen." However, it also bore signs of dilapidation, with columns and blocks of marble lying around; moreover the ciborium had recently been smashed up by Arab raiders, according to Symeon, the church's priest. It is from Symeon, however, that Niketas heard the even more striking story of Theoktiste herself, a tale which Symeon himself had picked up from a hunter from Euboia who used to come to Paros to hunt game when the island was all but deserted. On one of his trips, the hunter came across a female hermit, Theoktiste; she was living in the ruins of the church on lupin seeds; she told him she was originally from another island, Lesbos, where she had been a nun, but that she had been captured by Arab raiders; it was only when she got to Paros that she managed to escape her captors (*Acta Sanctorum*, Nov. 4:224–33; *BHG* 1726; Theoktiste of Lesbos, *Life*: 95–116).

At face value, Theoktiste's *vita* appears to offer us the kind of data intrinsic to writing provincial history and establishing the nature of connections between locality and center. It provides interesting glimpses of how warfare between Byzantines and Muslim Arabs in this period had depopulated islands in the Aegean, destroyed churches, and led local inhabitants to frequent changes in residence and lifestyle. It also demonstrates how contemporary Arab raiding states, like Crete, prospered

through slaving. And indeed Cretan prosperity can be confirmed by contemporary numismatic evidence: ninth-century Crete minted its own gold coins (Christides 1984, 119–21). And yet, the life also confirms the glimmerings of change that can be observed elsewhere across the Byzantine world in the architectural and archaeological record at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries, especially the gradual reuse of late antique churches (for example, Bayliss 1997). Perhaps most striking of all this text demonstrates the importance of sea travel as a glue in the Byzantine world. The sea emerges as a vital axis of communication between Byzantium and its near neighbors, as well as between Constantinople and the provinces (Hordern and Purcell, 2000).

Theoktiste's short *vita* is only one of many saints' lives which contains clues about the Byzantine provinces. Her life, like so many others, are now much more accessible, thanks to better modern editions and translations. Indeed some of the most stimulating research on relations between the center and the locality in the Middle Byzantine period is already making use of such material (Neville 2004). Nevertheless, it is important that the would-be provincial historian exercises extreme caution in dealing with texts of this sort. As with all complex literary sources, hagiography is not simply a store of information ripe for raiding (Mullett 1997: 4; Howard-Johnston and Haywood 1999: 7–20). Genre, authorial intent, audience response, and textual structures all shape the "data" that such texts contain. Thus, in the case of the life of Theoktiste, the fact that her story is told third-hand to Niketas makes the reliability of her testimony doubtful at best. Indeed, perhaps there was no historial figure called Theoktiste at all; instead she may simply have been a figure conjured up by a skilled hagiographer who manipulated the recognizable tropes of female sanctity to create an exemplar. In this context, one might even argue that the local details are a rhetorical device, added for the purposes of verisimilitude, to make the story believable, rather than as the result of Niketas's own eyewitness observation of contemporary island conditions (see Whitby in this volume). Perhaps even Niketas's journey to Crete was a fiction? Moreover, even if we feel we can trust the local details, whether or not Niketas saw them, because they seem congruent with data from elsewhere, dangers still lurk, for the fact that such information is included in the service of a text written by a Constantinopolitan means that we see the Byzantine locality through the eyes of a member of the capital's élite rather than in its own terms.

Constantinople and the Provinces

Given the confusing nature of the source materials, and the degree to which many fields of Byzantine studies are still principally concerned with taxonomy rather than interpretation, it is perhaps not surprising that historians seeking to generalize about relations between the center and the provinces have often fallen back on a rather rudimentary set of stereotypes, above all a picture of a all-dominant, grasping center in tension with discontented provincials who for their part were ready to engage in separatist revolt at the slightest signal. These are stereotypes which tend to occur with particular frequency in explanatory models of imperial catastrophe, such as the

disintegration of the empire during the two decades before the Fourth Crusade. Such stereotypes, moreover, are appealing because they appear to be based on messages, both explicit and implicit, within contemporary sources. For instance, the image of a Constantinopolitan elite gorging on the resources of the provinces while providing the localities with no protection from external predators is visible in the testimonies of Eustathios of Thessalonike, metropolitan of the empire's second city at the time of the Norman attack of 1185, as well as in the letters of Michael Choniates, metropolitan of Athens in the latter decades of the twelfth century. The degree to which those outside the capital felt estranged from an omnivorous center is illustrated graphically by the historian and administrator Niketas Choniates, Michael's brother. His history famously describes provincials jeering members of the governing elite who fled Constantinople in the aftermath of the city's capture by the Fourth Crusaders in 1204 (Eustathios; Herrin 1975).

Beyond such explicit evidence, however, many sources also contain more indirect clues about a basic lack of interest in the provinces on the part of Constantinopolitans and the imperial government. Thus, most Byzantine historiography written before the thirteenth century and the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade focuses on the imperial capital and life at court. Letters written by Constantinopolitan secular officials and members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy serving in the provinces are shot through with the *topos* of *xeniteia*; their authors express tearful regret at being exiled from Constantinople to the poorly resourced and intellectually dead provinces (Mullett 1997). Moreover, it is striking how little detailed information is provided by administrative texts produced in Constantinople. Certainly such texts sometimes enable us to identify the names of different provincial administrative units (Oikonomides 1972); occasionally such texts enable us to associate certain economic products or topographical features with certain localities (Mango and Dagron 1995); yet many are almost entirely denuded of specific detail. This is a particularly conspicuous characteristic of the imperial legislative program of the tenth century in which successive emperors sought to curb the influence and wealth of the so-called "Powerful," aristocrats and/or imperial officials with considerable assets in the provinces who were thought to threaten the authority and power of the imperial center.

The explicit and implicit evidence produced by Constantinopolitan voices presents in these senses, then, a particularly stark and asymmetrical model of center–periphery relations in which the provinces appear as poor relations, a paradigm which has usually been followed by modern historians of Byzantium. This is, however, not the only available interpretation of center–province dynamics. Rather different has been the approach adopted by Ihor Ševčenko, which advocates attending to the provincial perspective as much as to the Constantinopolitan. The provincial voices that Ševčenko considers include those expressed in hagiographical materials, letters, the Middle Byzantine eastern frontier epic *Digenes Akritas*, and the anecdotes articulated in the curious "Book of Admonitions and Anecdotes" composed by Kekaumenos in late eleventh-century central Greece. According to Ševčenko's reading of this evidence, far from crushing the localities with an iron fist, the government in Constantinople, whatever its ambitions for unquestioned obedience, exercised only intermittent and very loose control; on the remote frontiers provincials could afford to be blatantly hostile, so irrelevant to their daily lives was imperial governance (Ševčenko 1979–80

and 1995). Of course, a stern critic might question the provinciality of some of Ševčenko's sources. However strongly embedded it was in the oral traditions of Arab–Byzantine conflict on the eastern frontier, the most well-known version of the Digenes epic was, nevertheless, composed in its current form in twelfth-century Constantinople (Jeffreys 1998). Moreover, much of the material Ševčenko uses from the ninth century was composed by Constantinopolitans in exile. Wherever one looks, then, it seems that a Constantinopolitan gaze is inescapable.

Yet, while Ševčenko's witnesses may be less solidly based in the provinces than at first appears, his model nevertheless alerts us to an important observation about center–periphery relations in Byzantium: namely that the Constantinopolitan rhetoric of omnipotence in imperial government was not always followed through in administrative reality. This is an observation which underpins much recent revisionist work on the empire's frontiers in the ninth to eleventh centuries. Research in these cases stresses that many Constantinopolitan regimes, including those with fearsome reputations for strong government, were often forced, and sometimes even preferred, to leave the management of the frontiers in the hands of local elites rather than operating a heavy-handed administration manned by officials sent out from the capital. Meanwhile, beyond territory which was nominally Byzantine, client management through diplomatic means, including bribery and flattery, could be as important as armed intervention (Stephenson 2000; Holmes 2005). Nor is this model of frontier management unique to the Middle Byzantine centuries; it had important precedents in the use of client peoples in border territories in the Early Byzantine period too, most notably employment of the Arab Ghassanid confederation on the eastern frontier during the sixth century (Parker 1986). Moreover, one of the most interesting aspects of light-touch frontier management of the frontiers is the heterodox nature of many of the local agents of Byzantine government. In the tenth and eleventh centuries large numbers of these agents, particularly within the army, struck bilingual lead seals; some were non-Chalcedonians; others non-Christians. Where we can pick up more details about their careers in imperial service from other sources it is clear that confessional diversity did not preclude loyalty to Byzantium even in periods of crisis (Cheynet 1990, 1998). Meanwhile, although much of the discussion about Constantinople's streamlined approach to governance has focused on the frontiers, it is a line of inquiry with more far-reaching implications. Recently the model has been detected within the administration of the empire's inner provinces as well. Although further research is clearly required to develop and nuance this idea, nevertheless, the principle that the imperial center may not have had at its disposal as highly a developed bureaucracy for the running of the provinces as has sometimes been assumed needs to be taken seriously, not least so that the importance of other methods of local governance by the imperial center, including propaganda (oral, written, and visual), can be assessed (Neville 2004; Morris 2006).

Alternative Centers

Appraising the extent of the reach of Constantinople into the governance of the localities also raises the important question of whether it is time to reassess the

monopoly status accorded to the empire's capital. In other words, was Constantinople the only meaningful center in Byzantium? Here the picture, as with so many aspects of center–periphery relations in Byzantium's one-thousand-year history, is mixed. On the one hand, in the Early Byzantine period, other important civic centers apart from Constantinople can be identified, all of which had important roles within secular government, ecclesiastical organization, and education. Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, and even Rome were all very significant loci of authority and power as well as being the recipients of extensive private and public patronage. More minor provincial cities also remained critical to the functioning of provincial society until the seventh century (Ševčenko 1979–80). It is usually argued that this position changed radically following the territorial contraction of the empire in the wake of Arab, Slav, and Lombard invasions in the sixth and seventh centuries, as many important cities were lost, and as urban culture in those areas which remained under Byzantine control collapsed. According to this model, although some cities recovered some of their economic and demographic vitality during the period c.800–1200, Constantinople was unchallenged as the political, administrative, cultural, and religious hub of the empire (Whittow 1996). This position was only shaken by the fall of the city to the Fourth Crusaders, when a variety of successor states established their own alternative centers of power: in the case of the predominantly Greek-speaking regimes, these alternative centers included Nicaea, Trebizond, and Thessalonike (Nicaea: Foss 1996; Trebizond: Eastmond 2004; Thessalonike: Malamut 2003 and Talbot and Spieser 2004). Indeed, one could even argue that long after the restoration of Byzantine authority in Constantinople in 1261 by Michael VIII Palaiologos, emperor of Nicaea, alternative nodes of power and authority continued to flourish, patronized not just by the empire's rivals but also strikingly by the Palaiologoi themselves. Good examples of such alternative centers in the post-1261 period include Thessalonike, Mistra, and perhaps most significant of all for the cohesion of the wider Orthodox world, the monasteries on Mount Athos (Thessalonike: Mango 1979, 155; Mistra: Runciman 1980; Athos: Obolensky 1971; Oikonomides 1996).

Yet, while there are good reasons for tracing Constantinopolitan significance in the terms outlined above, nevertheless this is a pattern which needs further nuancing. For instance, it is not entirely clear that Constantinople's monopoly position was as absolute even in the Middle Byzantine centuries as is sometimes argued. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, military expansion brought new cities within the empire with the potential to act as alternative foci. This was particularly true of cities in the eastern frontier regions such as Melitene, Antioch, and Edessa. As I have already suggested, at an administrative and military level the subordination of the eastern frontier to Constantinople was often relatively superficial, with quotidian governance often remaining in the hands of local employees of the previous regime, and only the most senior office-holders being appointed directly from Constantinople. Even more intriguing is the degree to which Byzantine occupation meant that these cities became important centers in other, non-administrative, spheres of activity, including those outside the direct control of the imperial secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Thus, in the case of Melitene, Byzantine attempts to revivify the local economy in the aftermath of conquest in 934 included encouraging the settlement of Syrian Mono-

physite Christians. These non-Chalcedonian Christians appear to have been deliberately targeted because of their experience in trade with important economic centers in the contemporary Islamic world, particularly along the Tigris river (Dagron 1976; Holmes 2001).

However, with their material goods, the Syrians also brought their faith (see Finneran in this volume). The residence of the Syrian Patriarch at Melitene made the city a center of an alternative Christianity which certainly caused the local Chalcedonian church grave worries. Although it is unlikely that these anxieties were shared by emperors and their secular officials to the same degree, nevertheless Byzantine conquests undoubtedly acted as a catalyst for the revival of many different varieties of Christian experience in this region, the sheer complexity of which was difficult for the imperial authorities to manage. A particularly good example of this process at work comes from late tenth- and early eleventh-century Antioch and its hinterland. Here textual and material evidence attests to the foundation, refoundation, and expansion of monasteries and hermitages in the mountains of northern Syria by Greek- and Georgian-speaking Chalcedonian Christians, as well as by Armenian Monophysites. Competition was fierce both within and between traditions. Thus, various witnesses mention friction between Georgian and Greek monks living in the same Chalcedonian communities; at the same time Armenian and Syrian Monophysite bishops competed with the local Chalcedonian episcopacy for recruits (Djobadze 1976, 1986).

Traditionally, modern historians have interpreted such periods of ideological and religious ferment as indices of incipient imperial collapse. However in the Middle Byzantine period, it is clear that such competitive environments often reflected success as much as failure. The growth of a vibrant, and at times ruthlessly competitive, religious environment in northern Syria, for instance, seems to have been intimately connected to economic growth and enthusiastic patronage. Strikingly, both processes were driven by external forces attracted to an expanding Byzantium. Thus, the growth in the activities of the Armenian Monophysite church on the Byzantine eastern frontier and in eastern Anatolia during this period took place at the same as significant levels of migration into these regions by Armenians from the Transcaucasian principalities (Holmes 2001). Meanwhile, the very marked expansion of Georgian monasticism on the Wondrous and Black Mountains near Antioch is partly explained by patronage from Georgian principalities east of Byzantium (Djobadze 1976). Nor, of course, was northern Syria the only region of Byzantium in the Middle period to benefit from such external sponsorship. Other beneficiaries of Georgian patronage included the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos (Martin-Hisard 1991). Some of the financing for these foundations obviously came from salaries that Georgians earned while employed by the Byzantine emperor, particularly within the imperial army. But some funding came direct from external sources, especially the rulers of the Georgian principalities themselves. Perhaps more important, however, than the origin of the sponsorship was the impact of the activities of such foundations. For as a number of hagiographical texts, foundation documents, and manuscript colophons make clear, monasteries either founded by Georgians or with a substantial Georgian presence were the vital linchpins of networks which connected Byzantium

and its eastern Transcaucasian neighbors at both a political and a cultural level. It was, for example, through these monasteries that Georgian translations of Greek liturgical and hagiographical materials were made, often for the benefit of foundations back in the Georgian principalities. Just as significant, it was through monasteries in charismatic locales such as Athos, the Wondrous Mountain, and the Black Mountain that Georgian individuals and communities within the Byzantine empire were connected to each other (Djobadze 1976).

The argument that holy, particularly monastic, sites were important nodes on networks of communication within and beyond the Byzantine Empire for the Georgian communities in the Middle Byzantine period has obviously parallels, not least in the degree to which Slav-speaking Orthodox Christians developed ties within and beyond Byzantium (Obolensky 1971). However, it may not be a paradigm that we need to reserve to those communities which lay outside the "mainstream" Greek-speaking Orthodox communities of Byzantium. There is evidence within Middle Byzantine saints' lives that it was relatively common for holy men to move between charismatic locales both within and outside regions controlled by the imperial authorities. One striking case is that of St Lazaros, a holy man active in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries (Greenfield 2000). Eventually Lazaros took up the vocation of a stylite on Mount Galesion, in southwest Asia Minor, but before he settled down to life on a pillar, he journeyed widely in Asia Minor and the Levant, visiting Jerusalem and spending many years in monasteries in Palestine, incuding the Lavra of St Sabas. He also traveled to the Wondrous Mountain near Antioch and to a variety of sites in Asia Minor as a pilgrim. Meanwhile, a rough contemporary of Lazaros, St Phantinos, originated from southern Italy, but for the final eight years of his life established himself in Thessalonike, a city which was also home to Basil II's principal spiritual advisor in the late tenth century (Follieri 1993; Crostini 1996). Another tenth/eleventh-century contemporary, St Symeon of Trier, was born in Syracuse in Muslim Sicily to a Greek-speaking family and then educated in Constantinople (Coens 1950). Like Lazaros, Symeon traveled as a pilgrim to Jerusalem and later became a monk in Bethlehem. He eventually moved on to the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, becoming in subsequent years an important intermediary between the monastery, Byzantium, and the increasingly important world of pilgrims from western Europe, a role which involved trips to Rouen and Trier. Symeon died in Trier as a recluse walled into the Porta Nigra. With the support of the Archbishop of Trier, his posthumous cult became well known throughout northern Europe.

While the journeys undertaken by many of these saints' lives vary in their specifics, what is striking is the degree to which Constantinople is only one of many places that their protagonists choose to visit, or at the very least, one of the many places that their hagiographers and supporters believed it was important for holy men to have visited. Viewed from the perspective of saints and the cults which they spawned, the charismatic geography of Byzantium was not constructed around the singular center of Constantinople but instead took the form of a chain of smaller centers. If this is so, then these Middle Byzantine saints' lives may reflect ways of experiencing, understanding, and conceptualizing space and travel in the Byzantine Empire and in

the wider Mediterranean world which had long-established roots in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (McCormick 2001).

Constantinople Reaffirmed

The degree to which Constantinople was either threatened or overshadowed by the emergence of charismatic magnets such as Athos and the Black Mountain during the Middle Byzantine centuries is clearly a subject for further discussion, as is the degree to which important cities such as Antioch or Thessalonike were at different points rival political or administrative centers. However, it is worth stressing that whichever period we choose to examine, Constantinople still needs to be taken extremely seriously. To adopt the terms of a twelfth-century Byzantine rhetorician, Constantinople may at times have seemed wrinkled and decayed, sapped of vitality in the face of upstart rivals, but she often proved to have surprising and enduring strengths (Magdalino 1993).

One of those most important enduring strengths, particularly in the Early and Middle Byzantine centuries, was the extent to which imperial authority in Constantinople commanded the loyalty of provincial elites, who in turn acted as the vital bridge between the capital and the localities. Such loyalty had been written into the very structures developed to run the empire in Late Antiquity. Emperors such as Constantine enticed the provincial elites into support for a Constantinople-based regime by offering them places in the newly founded senate. Membership of the senate enabled provincials to qualify for a wide range of imperial offices and salaries (Heather 1994). As many historians have argued, this was a loyalty which came at a price as far as the effective exercise of imperial authority was concerned, because such favored provincials could use the public power with which they had been invested to foster their own private resources in the localities. That this price worried many imperial regimes may explain those legislative initiatives of the sixth and tenth centuries designed to curb the excesses of the "powerful" (sixth century: Sarris 2006; tenth century: Kaplan 1992, 414–43). Yet it is important that this legislation is not read as evidence of provincial disloyalty to the emperor in Constantinople. For although the "powerful" may have exploited their intermediary position between center and localities for their own benefit, the degree to which their own power and status in the provinces depended on their tenure of offices and salaries from Constantinople had the effect of cementing loyalty to power-structures in the capital. In this context, it is striking that throughout Byzantine history, revolts with their genesis in the provinces were rarely fomented with a view to local separatism, but rather with the aim of seizing power in Constantinople. Thus, rebellions which began in Egypt and Carthage were merely the preface to the final acquisition of imperial authority in the capital by Herakleios in 610. Likewise, the vast majority of revolts which began in the localities during the mid-tenth to mid-twelfth centuries were focused on regime-change in Constantinople rather than on provincial independence (Cheynet 1990).

The exact nature of ties between provinces and capital, particularly within the governing elite, is a subject which deserves further discussion. Quite clearly streams

of patronage from Constantinople in the form of salaries and titles were important. However, just as significant may have been cultural connections. In the case of the Early Byzantine centuries, it has been argued that one important cultural tie between center and provinces was an education system which enabled the gaining of those literacy and literary skills essential to participation in imperial government. For the most part such reciprocal connections are usually seen as pragmatic and economic; education was an investment which could reap handsome returns in the form of salaries and offices. However, it may be that we need to look beyond financial imperatives. There are important questions to be asked in all periods of Byzantine history about how educational practices contributed to the construction, diffusion, and maintenance of ideas about empire throughout imperial territories and beyond (Mango 1980; Heather 1994). At the very least, more research into how the provinces received and responded to the political culture of the empire's capital is needed. This is particularly important if we wish to understand why so many of the regional regimes that typified the highly fragmented politics of the eastern Mediterranean world in the post-1204 centuries continued to look to Byzantine Constantinople for models of governance and ceremonial (Shepard 2006; Eastmond 2004; Necipoğlu 1991: 3–22).

FURTHER READING

For information on specific provinces see the *Tabulae Imperii Byzantini* (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 1976–2004) in 10 vols. Important for eastern Anatolia and the Pontus are Bryer and Winfield 1985; Sinclair 1987–90. On Byzantine Egypt see Sarris 2006. The classic work on Syria is Tchalenko 1953–8. On Antaolia see Mitchell 1993. From the later Byzantine centuries: Ahrweiler 1965; Angold 1975; Bryer 1979; Nicol 1984; McKee 2000; Georgopoulou 2001. On Crete see also Tsougarakis 1988.

To this list one can add collections of essays which either offer a multi-authored approach to a particular province or engage with a particular theme from a provincial perspective, including Fonseca (ed.) 1981. Comparative approaches include Kingsley and Decker (eds) 1999. Rural society throughout the Byzantine Empire has recently been examined through the "village": Lefort, Morrisson, and Sodini (eds) 2001.

For provincial cities, see I. Ševčenko 1979–80; for Antioch see Liebeschuetz 1972. For urban life in smaller cities, early Byzantine western Asia Minor is a rich field of research: see, for example, Foss 1976 and 1979; Roueché 1989.

Sigillographical material has been used extensively by Stephenson 2000 and Holmes 2005, esp. chapters 6 and 7. On circulation see Cheynet and Morrisson 1990; Doimi de Frankopan 1997 and 2001.

For arguments about the rhetoric of Constantinopolitan omnipotence and omniscience outstripping the reality which have also been made with reference to Byzantium's conversion missions, especially in eastern Europe, see Shepard in Mango (ed.) 2000: 230–47.

CHAPTER SIX

Insiders and Outsiders

Dion C. Smythe

What does it mean to be British, to be Muslim, to be Iraqi, to be Byzantine? Can national citizenship be combined with any religious affiliation, or are there limits? Does, or indeed should, confessional identity take priority over citizenship? Can one be a black Briton or is one forever destined to be merely a British Black (Gilroy 2002)? I am not suggesting that a quick glance at Byzantium will provide the ultimate answer to these large questions of identity. However, questions of identity and of a mixed social fabric by religion, ethnicity, language, and culture are not unique to the modern world. Dealing with identity, the Byzantines have been there before us. The Byzantine example may not provide solutions that we would wish to follow, but such an examination does allow us to work out how to approach the problem, which, given its emotive nature, is indeed half the battle.

What's the Problem?

Who were the Byzantines? The Byzantines were people who lived in the eastern Mediterranean region, who spoke Greek, called themselves "Romans," lived on top of pillars, stole other people's relics, and poked people's eyes out. As a summation of Byzantine civilization, it covers geographical location, language, ethnic identity, religion, custom, and habit (it leaves out material culture, but that is par for the course). Based on a reading of Cyril Mango's *Byzantium: the empire of New Rome*, it draws together the Roman polity, Greek language and culture, and Christian religion—though admittedly in its Syriac variant, with its rather more bizarre stylite practices (Mango 1980; Magdalino 1991). Mentioning Syriac Christianity draws forward one of the problems with the definition of "Byzantine," for while the dominant culture of the Byzantine Empire was, for a thousand years, Greek-speaking Orthodox Christian, not all Byzantines conformed to this pattern; before the irruption of the Islamic conquests in the seventh century, the eastern portions of the

empire were Christian but largely Syriac speaking, not Greek speaking (Dagron 1976). Language, religion, and ethnicity all combine to make "identity."

To take the easy example to prove the point, within the thousand-year history of Byzantium there was a distinctive Byzantine Jewish culture. It was not a distinctive population, at least not by any criteria we could now hope to capture, but the civilization was distinctively both Jewish and Byzantine with its own prayer books, rituals, and identifiable contribution to wider Jewish civilization (Dagron 1991; Dagron and Déroche 1991; de Lange 2000). Religiously, of course, Jews were distinct from Christians. Religion can and did serve as a marker of a separate identity.

Within the broad church of Christianity, one needs to remember that Byzantium was therefore not uniformly "Christian." The Jewish minority was small, but despite Byzantine writers' attempts to occlude the fact, it did exist. Within the dominant Christian majority, it is necessary to recall that not all Byzantine Christians were "Orthodox." The first five hundred years of Byzantine history is characterized by a series of Christological and theological arguments and schisms (Ware 1963). At various points, the beliefs endorsed by the Ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople changed (most clearly during the Iconoclast Controversy). Who then was the "real" Christian?

The same issue presents itself in a rather different guise over the language question. It is indisputable that for most of the empire's history, most of its citizens wrote Greek—it was the language of the written culture—but not all of them spoke it without exception. Before Justinian's reign (527–65), a proportion of the empire's population spoke Latin as the public language of government. In the east, there was a sizable Syriac linguistic minority, at least prior to the Arab conquests of the seventh century. In the middle Byzantine period, Armenian, Georgian, Bulgarian, Italian, and even Anglo-Saxon were not unheard on the streets of Constantinople (Mango 1980). Granted, residence in the imperial capital could be short-term for trade or adventure, as the Viking Harald III Sigurdsson Hårdråde's career shows (his equivalent of a finishing school in the Australian outback was a stint in the imperial bodyguards, the *varangoi*; he reigned as King of Norway 1046–66: Benedikz 1969), but some traders settled down and stayed, despite the best efforts of the city eparch, responsible for Constantinople, to limit them to no longer than six months in the *mitata* (the combination of bonded warehouses and commercial hotels run by the authorities in Constantinople where foreign merchants were required to lodge). Some languages in the Byzantine Empire were the result of transient populations (Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse), but more significant was the lingua franca of Greek and to a limited extent Latin, which as the carriers of "universal" written culture overlay the different languages of domestic interaction. Speaking Greek—nor even reading and writing Greek—cannot be taken as the definitive marker of Byzantine identity.

When talking about divisions in human society, there is one marker that cannot be dealt with easily or quietly: it is too important for that. With the exception of the extreme ranges of the skin-color somatypes (and there are always exceptions even here), no accurate division of human populations at the level of the individual is possible on scientific grounds (Banton and Harwood 1975: 48–9 and 57; Berry and Tischler 1978: 35). People belong to the human race; folk notions of a "Caucasian

race," a "Muslim race," an "Indian race," an "Anglo-Saxon race" are just that: notions with no basis in scientific fact or analysis (Banton 1979: 129–30). At the genetic level, it is possible within human populations to identify clines, which identify shared genetic chromosomes in much the same way as isobars unite areas of identical pressure on a weather map (Huxley 1938: 219–20; Banton and Harwood 1975: 58–9; Berry and Tischler 1978: 35). However, markers such as these divide groups of human populations; scientists have found that such clines do not demarcate the folk "racial groupings."

Who were the Byzantines? Four Ways of Approach

Four articles have previously attempted to answer the question: who were the Byzantine outsiders (Lopez 1978; Patlegean 1981; Beck 1979; Laiou 1991)? In the title of his article, "Foreigners in Byzantium," Lopez identifies outsiders with foreigners. His is a relatively straightforward legal definition, attempting to use the notion of "citizenship." The problem here is that Byzantines did not carry identity cards, nor indeed did they have passports; there was no Department of Immigration and Naturalization answerable to the *Logothete of the Drome* (the minister charged with posts, the imperial communication relays, diplomacy, and spies). With a more medieval turn of mind, Lopez turns to ideas of liability for tax or military service as a good indicator of "belonging." This would probably work for a society in which we held all the tax registers and could "look up" individuals about whom we were interested. This is not the case in Byzantium. Lopez then falls back on the late imperial ideas about Roman citizenship: if one lived within the boundaries of the empire and "lived like a Roman" then one was a "Roman," and thus a Byzantine. This begs the question of course of how one describes "living as a Roman/Byzantine." Clearly it implied—if not required—living as a "not barbarian," but this takes us back to the inherent dynamic tension between "insiders" and "outsiders," with both defined unhelpfully in terms of the other. With Lopez's article, we have moved one step forward because we now have a better idea of the problem, but two steps back, as solutions are as elusive as ever (Lopez 1978).

What constitutes "Byzantineness" attracts Patlegean's attention. Using terminology first delineated by Mary Douglas to describe societies, where societies could range from being "weak group" to "strong group" and "weak grid" to "strong grid," giving four basic categories (Douglas 1966), Patlagean uses the dualist heretics of Byzantium as an example of how the Byzantines defined those different than themselves, therefore at the same time what it meant to be "Byzantine." Examining the Byzantines and how they described the Manichaean heretics, and later the Bogomil heretics, Patlegean detects a "grid," a scale of otherness upon which certain markers are positioned. Being aligned with these markers then determines one's position on the Byzantine/not Byzantine scale. Rather than tax or military service, Patlagean focuses on consumption—of food and sex—to determine whether one is "Byzantine" or not. From the sources, Patlagean draws four categories of people, based on the meat that they ate: savages (who ate raw meat); non-Christian barbarians (who ate

cooked meat with no limitations); Christians (who ate cooked meat in limited quantities and observed certain "meatless periods" like Lent); and then the dualist heretics (who ate no meat at all, in an excessive scrupulousness which showed their error). Sexual activity followed a similar plan. Barbarians were slaves to Venus; Christian barbarians failed to maintain the proper distances between the sexes; Christian Romans (that is, the Byzantines themselves) moderated and civilized sexual intercourse by placing it in the context of Christian marriage; heretics practiced all manner of unmentionable vices, but concealed them with ascetical dissimulation. The Byzantine examples that Patlegean cites shows that it is frequently the border with the smallest incremental difference that needs to be policed most vigorously. Taking the meat-eating example, the barbarians eating raw meat are clearly beyond the pale; most dangerous to well-ordered Christian society are those heretics who abstain completely from meat: those who acted like Orthodox monks. The same is true of differences in sexual habits: the barbarians are easily rejected; the real danger lies with the Bogomils, who in their rejection of sexual intercourse appear to be the same as the Orthodox monks and nuns, and hence the Orthodox Byzantine sources have to fall back on the claim that the Bogomils' rejection of sexuality was merely a subterfuge, and that in reality they engaged in all manner of vice. This is apparent, for example, in Anna Komnene's description of Basil the Bogomil in her biography of her father Alexios I Komnenos, the *Alexiad* (*Alexiad* 15,8). Patlegean's insight is illuminating and helpful in proposing an avenue of approach, but unfortunately it only takes us so far in attempting to determine what made a Byzantine a Byzantine (Patlegean 1981).

Beck develops the exploration of this thesis that "the closest but different is the most dangerous" by use of the idea of "non-conformity," derived from the Elizabethan Church Settlement of the 1560s in England (Beck 1979). On its travels from conformity (or not) to the specific seventeenth-century Test Acts, notions of non-conformity have lost their legal roots; conformity and non-conformity in sociology are now the two sides of a socially constructed boundary (which I shall discuss below). Social norms can be strongly enforced or can be little more than guides to "right" behavior. Similarly, non-conformity to social norms can be radical and revolutionary or can be a kind of "withdrawal" and rejection of society along with the norms it produces. For Beck, the norms of Byzantine society originate in Christian Orthodoxy, in the autocracy of imperial Constantinople, and in the Greek forms of education and civilization. Byzantine norms do not derive from one or other of these sources but in the particular and unique gyre of all of them round the notion that was "Byzantium." Beck gives a name (of sorts) to the dominant ideology of Byzantium, held (mostly) by the insiders. However, Beck finds it impossible to define what that ideology was in abstract (separated out from specific insiders), and so turns to the dissenters, the outsiders. By delineating the outsiders (*these* were outsiders; and *these*; and *these*) then clearly those left in the middle are the insiders and the norms they held those of the "ideological, political, and cultural swirl" of the Byzantine dominant ethos (Beck 1979: 314–15). As a historian, Beck recognized that these norms of dominant ethos and non-conformity change through time. Dissent is often marked

by external signs: Beck cites the Gaullist cross of Lorraine during the French Fourth Republic, or long hair on men for hippies in the 1960s.

Hair-length is a means of identifying dissent or non-conformity in Byzantium as well. In the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus, a little story is told that because the emperor Theophilos (829–42) was losing his hair and wore it cut short in a "number one" buzz-cut, he forced all the courtiers also to wear their hair in a razor cut (Theophanes Continuatus). Theophilos was an iconoclast, though perhaps not as "ideologically pure" perhaps as the great iconoclasts of the previous century such as Leo III (717–41) or Constantine V (741–75). The iconophile author of the *Chronicle*, writing about one hundred years after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843, when icons were restored as "correct belief" and iconoclasm denounced as a heresy, was consequently not well disposed towards Theophilos. So this iconoclast emperor was portrayed as a skinhead: the outward non-conformity of his hair reflected the inward rebellion of his iconoclasm. Not all iconoclasts were portrayed as skinheads, however. The "shaggy punk" or "afro" hair-do given to John the Grammarian, the iconoclast patriarch, by the illuminators of the iconophile, ninth-century Khludov Psalter shows the disorder of his mind by the disorder of his hair, just as the visual comparison is made between the Roman soldiers handing gall to Christ on the cross and John the Grammarian painting out an icon (Khludov Psalter, Moscow, Hist. Mus. Cod. 127, fol. 67r). Here again a source, opposed to the policy of iconoclasm, created after the events and people it portrays, indicates opposition to John the Grammarian, a notorious (at least to the iconophiles) iconoclast, and shows his marginal status by giving him outlandish hair. The direct connection is not between "skinhead" and "iconoclast," nor between "long-haired hippie" and "iconoclast;" the direct connection is between non-conformity in hair-length (either too long or too short) and religious non-conformity (what the Byzantines saw as heresy). Long hair, especially if it was cut in outlandish styles, showed excessive display, not the ascetic lack of care for the body typical of the desert father with long matted hair. Similarly, beards usually indicated the holy man fresh from the desert, but they could mark an unhealthy interest in the philosophical life, tainted by Hellenic, "exterior" learning.

Beck's article is useful because it stresses the idea of "non-conformity" rather than any absolute of "heresy," and because the notion of "non-conformity" immediately requires some consideration of the conformity against which it is a response (so encouraging an interactive perspective). Beck manages (just) to give a label to the dominant ideology of Byzantium, but is unable to really define in concrete terms what it is. It is perhaps unfair to expect him to do so, though he does raise the expectation. The attempt to define Byzantine—or any culture—in this way is not possible.

Laiou returns to ideas first mooted by Lopez, drawing the link between foreigner and stranger (Laiou 1991). Laiou links the idea of the foreigner to legal and political definitions to do with jurisdictions. This is then contrasted with notions of the stranger and the other. In my mind, Laiou draws too strong a distinction between the concept of the "foreigner" and the "stranger/other." The two categories are not

neatly mutually exclusive, and they display awkward confusions and overlaps in Byzantine society as much as in our own society. The example she cites as evidence concerns the loyalty of John Axouch to the emperor John II Komnenos when he came to the throne as being stronger than the loyalty of John II's own kin. This is a reference to the attempted coup by John II's sister, Anna Komnene, and her husband Nikephoros Bryennios on Alexios I Komnenos's death in 1118. However, I would suggest that the otherness of John Axouch's origin—he was a captured and converted Muslim Turk—is much stronger than an otherness that owes its genesis merely to origin "outside the small social grouping, often meaning outside the family." What Laiou does do is highlight changes over time. She correctly identifies the twelfth century as a period with much greater interaction between Byzantium and equivalent societies both to the East and the West. The assumption of inherent superiority, which served Byzantium well dealing with the West since Charlemagne, was no longer sufficient. The traditional conceit of Greek-speaking Constantinople surrounded by circles of ever-increasing barbarity as one moved from the imperial center continued with its classical names for ethnic groups and stereotypes for their behavior, but it is apparent that a new realism was abroad at home. This is the great advance provided by Laiou's article. Laiou attempts to prove the case that religion was the marker of otherness in twelfth-century Byzantium. The evidence does not support her assertion. Religion was one marker, but so too was ethnicity, gender, and *taxis* (class). How the Byzantines responded to the increasing interactions between different human groups is most clearly understood using categories from sociological studies of human societies in interaction.

A Theoretical, Sociological Perspective

Berry and Tischler provide the synthesis of much sociological and anthropological research in the area of human social groups or societies in contact and interaction (Berry and Tischler 1978). Social interaction of human social groups can be categorized into one of five types: annihilation (the sociologists' infamous "war of all against all"), segregation, stratification, pluralism and assimilation (Berry and Tischler 1978: 91). Five neat categories *do* cover all possible interactions (remember that we deal here with group interactions, not interactions on the personal level), but direct exposure to evidence shows that they are anything but "neat." Rarely, perhaps with the exception of the extreme realization of annihilation, does any interaction fall neatly into any one single category. Usually there is a dominant aspect (hence the utility of the five-fold categorization) but there are overtones or complications of aspects of other modes of interaction as well. People are complicated. Additionally, as historians, rather than sociologists or social anthropologists, we recognize that people's interaction will change over time, as does any human activity. An interaction that begins as segregation may move through stages of stratification, pluralism to assimilation; or may stop at any of the intervening points. From any point of interaction it may move retrograde to annihilation, even from assimilation so long as the groups can create or identify a distinction marker between the groups.

The idea of the markers of distinctiveness between social groups moves us on the next significant point: how sociologists have attempted to identify the insiders and the outsiders, namely who constituted the "outsider" groups. This concentration on the "outsider" part of the equation shares with Beck an unexamined expectation that it is easier to examine the minority (it is assumed) "outsiders" than the (majority) "insiders." However, it also derives in part from Durkheim's classic study of suicide and his identification of *anomie* as the perfected state of rejection of human society and all its norms, laws, and customs (Durkheim 1952). Under the utilitarian imperative, sociological work in the period after 1945 focused on social amelioration—finding out the cause of social dysfunction with the intention of correcting it. This meant that there was a concentration on criminals and those who rejected society. In the 1960s, however, sociologists, in common with wider society, experienced a questioning of social "givens." Attention shifted slowly to look at middle-class, functioning, occasional users of cannabis, as well as the heroin or crack addict "on the skids;" at perpetrators of white-collar insurance fraud, as well as "fences" for stolen goods (Liazos 1972–3: 111a). Widening the scope of who was assigned outsider roles, when it happened and who actually did the assigning meant that a new level of outsider status developed. The clearest and most convincing of these apostles is Howard Becker (Becker 1973).

The crux of the matter is that to be an outsider has nothing to do with what one has done, has nothing to do with what one thinks; it has everything to do with how one is labeled by surrounding society. Outsiders are created by societies defining certain actions or attitudes as beyond the pale, *at the same time* as they find people who express those attitudes or actions who can be cast into the outsider roles without any danger to the long-term survival of the society as a whole. The markers that are used to distinguish between the insiders and the outsiders are "cultural"—that is to say they are symbolic constructs, which have meaning only because the people who use and display them give them meaning. Does it matter if I eat my boiled egg from the narrow end or from the broad end? Does it matter if I say "shibboleth" or "sibboleth?" It matters only if society has decided one is correct and the other is wrong. "Deviance is not a quality that lies in behavior itself, but in the interaction between the person who commits an act and those who respond to it" (Becker 1973: 14).

The Matrix

The five modes of social interaction can then be coupled with the five universal markers that human societies use to differing and changing degrees as the symbolic cultural markers between "insiders" and "outsiders." In merely alphabetical order, these are ethnicity, gender, [sexual] orientation, religion, and *taxis* (which is to say "class," but not limited to purely economic classifications; in Byzantium one's social class rested on possession of an education, and access to education was limited by one's parents' ability to pay for it). The result of combining these two lists is an analytic framework or matrix, presented in Table 6.1. The numbers given in the cells refer to examples discussed below in this chapter.

Table 6.1

	Ethnicity	*Gender*	*Orientation*	*Religion*	Taxis *(Class)*
Annihilation	(5)			(5)	(7)
Segregation	(4)				(6)
Stratification	(3)	(1)			(3)
Pluralism	(2)				
Assimilation		(1)			(6)

As with the modes of interaction (annihilation, segregation, stratification, pluralism and assimilation), the five modalities of difference are not neat, exclusive categories. Being an outsider by gender did not determine that one was also an outsider by ethnicity, religion, or *taxis*—though one could have been all three, merely two, or only one. Insider status on one category did not guarantee security on all the other categories (ethnicity, orientation, religion, *taxis*), and additionally it must be remembered that the roles were not fixed: one could move from segregation by ethnicity to assimilation over time. The weakness of the five-by-five matrix is that it looks as if individuals in interaction can be placed in the relevant cubbyhole and just left there. This is the "neat and tidy" version of historical study. The problem is that once allocated to their "right" place, individuals as recorded in the sources keep fighting their way out of "outsider statuses," and insist on moving around. This should not come as a surprise, but it frequently does. Reasonably, it may be asked then if an analysis that is so mutable is much use. It is, because it provides a way of looking at changing human interaction in society, giving some overarching structure but retaining the flexibility to recognize change in individuals' roles and statuses over time, as they move between "insider" and "outsider" statuses as reflected in the primary sources, both written and material, as we have seen with the marginal illuminations of the Kludov Psalter.

Women as Outsiders (1)

Byzantine society was largely patriarchal. This meant that being a woman precluded one from doing or being certain things: being emperor was the prime example. It automatically excluded women from full participation in society; it made them outsiders. A prejudice derived from St Paul, it continued through the early patristic writers and continued down to the scribblings of St Neophytos the Recluse in twelfth-century Cyprus, no longer part of the Byzantine empire (Galatariotou 1984–5).

However, this outsider status as "woman" could be overcome, as the reign of the empress Zoe demonstrates. Zoe was the daughter of Constantine VIII, and with her sister, Theodora, she provided the means of transmission of the Byzantine empire at the end of the male line of the Macedonian dynasty from 1028 until the death of Theodora in 1056. In his *Chronographia*, the Byzantine scholar and statesman,

Michael Psellos, described the reign of the two sisters—and highlighted his ambivalence to women rulers (Psellos, *Chron.* 6, 1–16). Following on from the account of the downfall of Michael V, brought on by his lowly origins and rejection and exile of Zoe, who as his adoptive mother was his means of access to the throne, where Psellos had emphasized the unnaturalness of Michael V's actions and the behavior of the crowd opposing him, where women and children came onto the streets and forced the overthrow of the tyrant, Psellos's description of the two reigning empresses is one of the natural order restored. The sisters are shown enthroned, surrounded by the serried ranks of courtiers, the final outer layer composed of the foreign imperial bodyguards, whose symbolic role as foreigners was to stress the role of the Byzantine *basileus* (emperor) as ecumenical ruler, not just as emperor of the Romans (that is, the Byzantines) but as ruler of the whole world under Christ. The women sat immobile, speaking rarely and in low and soft voices when necessity drove them to utterance. On the one hand this seems to indicate the "shy, retiring woman" beloved of patriarchy. However, it is also necessary to recall that this tradition of lack of motion, silence, and controlled speech was characteristic of the Byzantine *basileus*.

It is impossible to say which of these traditions was uppermost in Psellos's account. His overall appraisal of the two sisters' rule, however, is very overtly positive: both the military and civil branches of the administration pulled together as if in harness in the best interests of the state. It is only later that Psellos allows a certain uncertainty: the care of the officials in doing their duty may have been because they suspected that they would be held to account at a later date, not in the abstract sense of before God, but by the inevitable *male* inheritor of the empire from the two imperial sisters. This criticism then seems to allow Psellos further liberty, as he then stressed that the perfection of the rule of the sisters was all to do with appearance: they seemed fit to govern, but it was not right for women to hold the sceptres of Byzantine power, and their understanding was insufficient to guide the empire (Hill, James, and Smythe 1994). As we shall see in subsequent cases as well, outsiders coming in from the cold always retain their outsider status to some degree. They remain forever "Asian Britons," never just "Britons," forever "women rulers," never just "rulers."

Varangoi as Ethnic Outsiders—Pluralism (2)

This ambivalent quality—of being insiders yet still outsiders—can be seen in the *Varangoi*, the imperial bodyguard of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Originally recruited from the Northmen, whether Scandanavian Vikings or Kievan *Rhos*, the Varangians came to be recruited more and more from the Anglo-Saxons displaced by the Norman Conquest in England after 1066. Symbolically, the Varangian guard, standing round the emperor at diplomatic receptions, served to stress the ecumenical, and God-given, aspects of Byzantine imperial authority (Smythe 1993). In practice, they were mercenaries whose loyalty remained "bought" so long as their salaries were paid. Given their "northmen" origins, their loyalty was personal, an oath to an individual emperor; in this they sometimes missed the nuances of *Realpolitik*, which forced true Byzantines to recognize the economical necessity of regime-change and

the need for a palace *coup d'état*. The difference of the *Varangoi* was one based on ethnicity: whether Vikings, Kievan *Rhos*, or Anglos-Saxons, the *Varangoi* were not ethnic Byzantines. Proverbially known for their loyalty and for their favored weapon of the double-headed axe, the Varangians were allowed to have their own church in Constantinople, where they apparently followed a Western liturgy and used Latin Gospel books. Harald Hårdråde took service in the Byzantine Empire for a little time, returning to his native Norway to become king (r. 1043–66). Other *Varangoi* may have taken benefit of the acceptance of Varangian difference to marry and settle down in Constantinople. How this acceptance of pluralism extended to long-term residence in the City, or to those who were too old to be bodyguards, or to the children of settled couples in Constantinople, is unclear. However, we know that Psellos regarded the loyalty of the *Varangoi* as something handed down like an inheritance through the generations. The question is, was this metaphorical or literal: was there a caste of Constantinopolitan-born Varangians, who received their posts from their fathers in the imperial bodyguard? The sources imply there was, but the evidence is not fully conclusive.

Lack of Education as an "Outsider Marker"—Stratification (3)

The aspect of stratification is reflected in the histories of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in attitudes to education, or, rather, to attitudes to lack of education. The composition of histories or any text with literary aspirations in Byzantium implies education, and in Byzantium education brought with it condescension to the unlettered. As Ihor Ševčenko has pointed out, literacy, but perhaps more precisely, literary education served as the badge to unite the Byzantine elite (Ševčenko 1981: 302). It was, in effect, the label of the insiders, and it could be used to mark out those who did not belong. This was the case in the descriptions by Anna Komnene of John Italos in the *Alexiad*. His speech was unlettered, and his accent betrayed his non-Constantinopolitan origins. Though educated in the City, his "barbarian" nature prevented his full assimilation of the Byzantine traditions of philosophy and rhetoric. When he seemed likely to lose an argument, he resorted to violence (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 5,8). In John Italos, barbarian origin, revealed by a poorly Hellenized tongue, coupled with faulty education, led to heresy.

One feature of education as an "outsider marker" is that it usually served to reinforce the transgression of another boundary; it did not serve alone. It is impossible to "prove" absolutely why this was so, but it seems likely that education as a boundary between "insider" and "outsider" got tangled in the Christian argument between "interior" and "exterior" wisdom. Within the Christian tradition of Byzantine Orthodoxy, it had been established that "interior" wisdom—in effect revelation from God—was superior to "external" wisdom—knowledge or understanding gained by study or from traditional authorities. It was this belief that gave the desert fathers their authority over their disciples. Their origins may have been as "rude mechanicals," but their time in the desert and the illumination they gained from God served to overwhelm all possible learning from books and teachers. The lives of the saints

record how they were unschooled save from learning the psalms at their mother's knee; it was—it seems—this lack of contamination from exterior learning that made the saints open to God's call and enabled them to do His bidding. Psellos, perhaps unsurprisingly, usually adds a layer of lack of education to any negative description. This should signal an extra vigilance: because a source says something about a person, it does not mean that it is true. The "lack of education *topos*" can be a neat shorthand way of indicating that the person so described is not "one of us." Modern society now hides behind more veils, the subtle put-downs and delineations between the "people like us" and the "non-U," but that does not mean that they are any less pervasive in occurrence or in effect.

Segregation of Ethnic Outsiders: Manuel I Komnenos's Fleet(s) (4)

Given the belief that Byzantine society was extremely xenophobic, one might expect numerous instances of segregation; in reality they are few in number. The clearest example I can point to concerns mercenary troops in the fleets when Manuel I Komnenos was attacking Corfu. The ships were divided into Venetian and Roman squadrons "so that in this way the ships at anchor of both races would be unmingled and inexperienced in the disagreements that [come] of promiscuous mixing" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 77–8, 36–9). The first thing to note in this quotation from Niketas Choniates is that there was experience and expectation that differing "races" would disagree and squabble if placed together. Distinct groups, all placed in a melting pot and left to simmer, will boil over; the scum that rises to the surface needs to be skimmed off and removed, and the heat added to the system needs to be regulated.

Annihilation: from the Text, from History (5)

Forms of "total segregation" lead on to annihilation, utter removal. There is a certain kind of Byzantine "final solution." We know from Jewish sources that there were Jews in sufficient numbers in Constantinople to be a distinctive component of city life. From Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, however, they are so "segregated" as to be invisible. It is impossible to account for the absence, though it may be that the presence of an "unbeliever" community in Constantinople would have been too much in this account, which stresses Alexios I's Orthodoxy. Compared to the three "historical" (i.e. referring to the distant past about which Anna Komnene was not writing) mentions of Jews in the *Alexiad*, Choniates has two mentions, one historical to the Jewish legion which fought Titus, and the isolated reference to the place across the Golden Horn "separated off for the burial place of the Jews" as the execution spot for Andronikos Doukas in 1184.

In contrast, the personal annihilation of Michael V in Psellos's account has a clear reason (Psellos, *Chron.* 5, 16–51). Michael V gained the empire through dubious means. Psellos was always suspicious of his origins, and his treatment of Zoe, through

whom he had gained the empire, coupled with his low origins, was enough to make Psellos his enemy. If his accession to the throne had made Michael V realize the nobility of his task, and he had mended his ways, then Psellos's account would have been more positive (the idea of the leisured fool gaining the throne, and subsequently the realization of how he must work for the good of the empire—not his own pleasure—is a recurrent one in the *Chronographia*). However, Michael V remained deaf to his higher calling and soon gave way to baser passions as he descended in Psellos's description from being "*basileus*" to being a "tyrant." This enabled Psellos to describe in positive fashion the rebellion against Michael V and the restoration of the "true" heirs of Basil II.

Author Historians as Outsider Insiders (6)

It is very easy to fall into the "realist" trap of outsider studies, that something about the individual provoked or caused the allocation of the outsider role. While socially allocated roles tend not to change, as historians we are used to looking at change in society and human interaction. The strongest, yet perhaps most paradoxical, evidence for this is the careers of the authors of the histories. All political life ends in failure, and normally when a political life of power and intervention is over, then the politician turns to the composition of memoirs, leaving to posterity the "true" account of what happened. In this, Byzantium is little different from our own society. Consider the three authors I have used here. Had Michael Psellos still been the wheeler and dealer, power-broker *par excellence* to the Byzantine court, a guiding hand for the Doukas emperor, he would not have had the time to write his *Chronographia*, nor would the latter part have been quite so clearly an attempt to curry favor with the regime that now held him surplus to requirements. If Anna Komnene's attempt to oust her brother John II Komnenos in 1118 to replace him on the throne with herself and her husband Nikephoros Bryennios had been successful, she would have had neither time nor inclination to write her eulogy of her father, scratching away in the lamp-light, held in virtual house arrest, isolated from all her contacts with her father's old comrades (the possible nucleus, after all, of an army loyal to Alexios I's memory, who could be weaned from their loyalty to the new emperor). Niketas Choniates is perhaps the most obvious "author outsider," as the conquest of the City in 1204 and his exile in Nicaea made him most literally a "stranger in a strange land." He sought to explain the revolution in his world by Act of God; the Byzantines had moved from following in the path laid out for them as God's Chosen People, had fallen to the blandishments of false gods, and so God had raised up over them evil emperors who were to serve as the agents of God's chastisement, with the Venetians acting finally in the role of the Babylonians: "If I forget thee, oh Constantinople …"

The process of writing "makes strange," Russian formalists tell us, and in making things strange—writing so that we see what we hold to be familiar in a new light—it also acts on the writer: having the ability to "look sideways" at something and to write it down so that others see its strangeness means that something strange enters the soul of the writer. Having written, authors thereafter will always have an aspect of themselves as "observers" rather than participants, with half a mind working on

how to express what they see and experience in words. Once lost, that eternal innocence can never be regained.

The example of the writers serves to break down the idea that outsider and insider categories are immutable. There are some outsider categories that are very strong. In some societies, certain categories are so rooted in the functioning society that they are internalized by the people placed in those outsider categories; they are a *basso continuo* to almost all other roles. But notice this: "*almost* all other roles." There will be social roles, perhaps as parent or partner, where the influence of the external social outsider role is absent. In most cases, however, the outsiders roles imposed by an exterior society are recognized exactly as that: imposed roles. They are not internalized and they are not accepted internally as part of the interior make-up of the individual. In interaction they may be used, especially when dealing with a member of the group that assigned the role in the first place, but they do not form part of the social construction of the individual personality.

Sic Semper Tyrannis

The mutable nature of outsider status is shown by two descriptions of rebels. In Psellos's *Chronographia*, the description of Isaac I Komnenos as a rebel against Michael VI shows him sitting in state as a "real" emperor. Isaak sat on a throne, "braced" with his head up, chest out and shoulders back. The strain of doing so made his cheeks darken. His eyes were fixed in meditation and showed a heart full of thought (Psellos, *Chron.* 7, 46). He was more economical in speech than anyone else and never let his tongue loose. The "state" in which he appeared, surrounded by ranks of courtiers and finally embraced in the outstretched arms of a barbarian bodyguard, showed that in Isaak Komnenos, the empire had found its next emperor. This situation, where an "emperor in waiting" is described in terms which stress his "insider nature" as emperor rather than his "outsider nature" as rebel, should be contrasted with Anna Komnene's description of her own father when he finally, at his mother's prompting, engaged in open rebellion against Nikephoros Botaniates in 1081. At this crucial point in the narrative, even the father-fixated Anna Komnene describes her father and uncle Isaac as rebels (*Alexiad* 2, 6.1), using the vocabulary that was used to describe those who opposed the legitimate emperor. The power of Anna Komnene's narrative is not so much that she describes her father as a rebel, but the way in which she achieves his modulation from "loyal subject," through obedient son, to outsider rebel, immediately followed by rapid re-integration from the liminal state of "rebel" to legitimate emperor, expressing contrition for any (unauthorized, of course) wrong actions undertaken by his underlings in the course of the rebellious coup d'état.

Conclusions: the "Way Out" is the Entrance

The concepts of "insider" and "outsider" do not provide rigid gridlines against which Byzantine society can be measured, delineated, and pinned down. Byzantine society, in common with any human society, was perpetually in flux. Using the labels of

"insider" and "outsider" in an avowed way to examine Byzantine society provides a workmanlike way into examining the particulars of the Byzantine way of changing society—by which I do not mean a planned change by some unseen hand, but the changes in Byzantine society in response to the passage of time. The "problem" as far as Byzantium is concerned is how a society survived for a thousand years, all the while proclaiming that nothing changed. From the modern perspective, the "changing yet unchanging" nature of Byzantium provides an example from which we may learn. We are told that our way of life is under attack, and that everything has changed, including the rules of engagement. We are told that in response we must change as well. The solution we do not want is to have a myth of Renaissance–humanist liberal democracy, matched to a state-apparatus (not a society) most concerned with its own survival, not the values of its citizens. Lessons from history are never very clear. History never, exactly, repeats itself. Examining how Byzantium dealt with outsiders and insiders and the movement of people across this permeable boundary shows how one particular society in the past has dealt with the issue. Whether we follow the Byzantine example or use the experience as a case-lesson in "what not to do" remains open, but by looking at Byzantine insiders and outsiders, we gain a better understanding of how Byzantine society functioned.

FURTHER READING

On defining "outsiders," Howard Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1973) is a good introduction. The collection of papers, *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Smythe 2000) is a set of articles from a conference on the Byzantine "outsider" and ideas of "outsiderness" across a range of areas, from history and theology to literature and art history.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Young People in Byzantium

Cecily Hennessy

About Byzantium, W. B. Yeats proclaimed, "That is no country for old men," and yet very largely we treat the history, the literature, the art of Byzantium as if it were made and experienced by, if not old, then mature people. This chapter seeks to redress the balance, asking questions about the place of children and adolescents in Byzantine society. Are we looking at a silent majority whose presence does little to affect the outcome of events or the quality of production, or are young people essential to our understanding of Byzantine society? How silent, in fact, were they?

To what group or groups of people are we referring? In attempting to define child or childhood, boy or girl, baby or adolescent in Byzantium, the sources are frequently perplexing. In contemporary society, we would be hard pressed to define the age limitations on childhood, and often discuss what is the reasonable age for a child to stand trial, to be morally responsible for his or her own actions, to make a decision about sexual relations, to have access to wealth, to finish formal education, to acceptably enter the workforce. Similarly, Byzantine views on these topics varied from situation to situation and over time, and it appears that, as with us, distinctions between childhood and adulthood were flexible and often indeterminate. Vocabulary does not really help us: words used to refer to young people are many and variably applied. One might speak of "my children," even though they may be pushing 25, or "my boy," who could be anything from a teeny tot to a strapping lad. Terms we come across include *neognon paidion* and *brephos* for newborn baby, *nipion* and *paidion* for little child, *pais* and *teknon* for child, boy, or girl, *meirakion* for boy, and *neaniskos* for youth or young man. Byzantines recognized that girls matured earlier than boys, and so prepubescence (*anibos*, *impubes*) ended at fourteen for boys and twelve for girls. *Ephebos* refers to those aged between 14 and 25 who were deemed sexually mature.

Relative to the total population, the young were more numerous in Byzantium than they are in Western society today. Assessments of age in a given historical population can be problematic, and some research ignores children in life-expectancy

figures, giving an inaccurate impression (Talbot 1984: 267–8; Patlagean 1977: 95–100). Undoubtedly, people did not, on average, live very long, although some certainly made it to a grand old age. Angeliki Laiou has drawn significant conclusions from studying fourteenth-century Macedonian peasants. Half of the children appeared to die before the age of 5, but their outlook improved after this age. Figures for the theme of Thessalonike in 1300–1 would suggest that 50% of the males were under 20, and 46% of the females were under 15, while only 6% of the men and 7% of the women were over 45 (Laiou 1977). These figures give an idea of what we might expect in other contexts not affected unduly by specific problems such as plague or war. The number of people under 20 was greater than those over that age, and so children and adolescents formed a majority of the population.

As in most pre-modern societies and in "developing" societies, children contributed to the practical sustaining of life; they were not simply playing or learning until their mid-teens, as seems more and more the preferred expectation of the young today. They did play, and most of them had at least basic education, but they also helped out in the home, in the workshop, in the market-place and in the fields, and became formally or informally apprenticed to "life skills." The young were numerous, and, it would seem, closely integrated into the economic and religious structures of life. As in any pre-modern society, the majority of children, especially those without wealth or position, were often not set apart from the "grown ups," but lived, slept, and worked in close association with each other.

A common assumption is that if children are integrated into adult life, society at large does not hold a concept of "childhood," nor appreciate or respect qualities we would call "childlike." This approach was notoriously proposed by Philip Ariès in the 1960s, and while repeatedly upbraided for its myopia, it often underpins attitudes towards children in history (Ariès 1962). For Ariès, modern childhood is centered on the love found within a nuclear family and on psychological and sexual innocence. But even in societies where children are involved in taking on responsibilities, such as chores or assisting working parents (which is still prevalent in more than two-thirds of the world), they are still looked upon as children, and do not lose the qualities that seem inherent in childhood, such as the desire to play games (even if the toys are self made and rudimentary). Work does not pre-empt childhood, just as education does not.

Any study of childhood is inevitably a reflection of its own time. While historical analyses of childhood in the third quarter of the twentieth century emphasized the low level of sentiments and emotional ties regarding medieval children, the final quarter and into the present century redressed the balance, and located warm feelings between parents and their children, often identified during illness or death, and developing the idea that "they were more like us." Both approaches are problematic in that they seek to make generalized views from specifics; and yet how else are we to form a coherent picture?

In looking for evidence for the place of children in Byzantium, we can turn to various textual sources. Laws are central to defining what can and cannot be done in given situations, and highlight problematic contexts; they present one aspect of the secular and religious authorities' approaches to children, although we can never tell

how consistently or usefully these were applied. It is much harder to gain an appreciation of children's societal roles in a non-legal sense, particularly as we are dealing with a vast geographical and historical period, on which very little research has been undertaken. Hagiographies give us idealized stories of children's lives, but ones that may reflect aspects of reality; histories purport to provide factual information which may occasional let us glimpse children's situations; unofficial texts such as letters and eulogies may reveal a slightly more personalized reality. Such anecdotal stories can highlight certain issues, but an overemphasis on those that have survived can certainly skew the reality. Visual evidence, in paintings, mosaics, illustrated books, and sculpture, can also give insight into activities and relationships, for children feature often in Byzantine representation. This chapter looks first at children's place in society as defined by the laws concerning coming-of-age, infanticide and abandonment, the care of orphans, and monastic life. This leads to a discussion of children's perceived sexuality, the familial settings within which they were brought up, and the various transitions they experienced in life. A further section focuses on questions of how they learned and worked, either as slaves or free, and the forms of play they adopted. The final part addresses questions of emotional relations between adults and children.

The legal coming-of-age for both men and women in Byzantium was 25, and prior to this they were termed minors (*afilikes*, *minores*) and under the authority of a guardian. Until the fourth century, women did not act as guardians for children, but Theodosios I permitted widows who did not remarry to be guardians for their children, and Justinian extended the jurisdiction to both mothers and grandmothers. It was, however, possible to gain independence earlier if the young proved their integrity. Presumably this was only necessary in cases where the guardian's control was contrary to the wishes of the dependant. Guardianship also served to protect orphans, whose adoption was carefully regulated from the time of Constantine, and, indeed, in general it was recognized that children had legal rights and needs (Miller 2003: 31; Miller 1996: 122–4).

An emotive way of assessing the value a society might place on human life is the practice of infanticide. This was illegal after 374, suggesting that prior to this date it was taking place, but it is hard to estimate how often and to what extent it continued (Patlagean 1973: 85; Moffatt 1986: 714–15). Certainly, children were sometimes abandoned, and more often girls were given up than boys, although infanticide, where the intent is for the child to die, is different from simply abandoning a child in the hope or expectation that it will be found and cared for by another (Boswell 1988; Miller 2003: 141–75). This may in some circumstances be considered a merciful action within a society organized to care for parentless children. The Justinianic Code mentions day nurseries (*brefotropheia*), which were operated by the Church to take care of abandoned children, presumably before they were adopted or placed in orphanages.

The preferred practice was for orphan children to be adopted by a relative or friend. Under Leo VI (886–912), various reforms regarding children were introduced, including widening the field of those able to adopt. This became not only open to married couples but also to single women and eunuchs (who could not marry), sug-

gesting that the goal was to place children under good care irrespective of a "traditional" family environment. A related move under Leo was to make it easier for children to be legitimated by their fathers, thus creating a stronger familial tie, though it does not appear that children who were born illegitimately were stigmatized (Yannopoulos 1975: 232–6).

The Church recognized that not all parentless children could be adopted, and assumed some responsibility for orphans. As early as the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea founded a residential school for boys and girls and accepted orphans as part of the monastic community (Miller 1996: 127–9; Kalogeras 2000:150, 222–3). Homes for parentless children were often overseen by bishops, as was the orphanage (*orphanotropheion*) of St Paul in Constantinople. This, perhaps the most prestigious of all orphanages, was founded by Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118). His daughter, Anna Komnene, wrote in the *Alexiad* with great pride of her father's philanthropy and maintained that he had more pride in the orphanage than in any city he had founded (*Alexiad* 15, 7). Chrysobulls were published declaring the "inalienable rights" of the orphans, who came from "all races" and were cared for and educated. Many of them had originally been prisoners or the children of prisoners. A monastery also founded by Alexios's son, the emperor John II Komnenos, in the following century, the Pantokrator in Constantinople, had eight orphans and four substitutes as candle bearers, who received payment for their work in money and grain. The orphans received 6 *hyperpyra nomismata* each week and 15 *modioi* of grain (Gautier 1974: 5–79, lines 783–5, 821; Thomas and Hero 2000: 754–5, rules 30, 32). This was slightly less than half the money received by the six priests and a little more than half the grain received by them, but it is not apparent when or where the orphans would have use for the money. It is, however, an interesting feature that the children were treated as contributing to the establishment and not simply as being the receivers of care. The orphans and "four respectable women of propriety, mature in age and character," known as the *graptai*, refreshed the brothers with water and oversaw the church.

In addition to orphan children at the monasteries, there were children sent by their parents to join the communities as well as those sent just to be educated, although the distinction between these two is sometimes hard to determine. The children could be very young: in the early Byzantine period, both girls and boys could be educated at monasteries from the age of 7, while by the end of the seventh century, legislation decreed that both boys and girls were only permitted to enter monasteries after the age of 10 (Patlagean 1973: 86, 88; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1973: 78). A frequent *topos* in hagiographic texts depicts a young saint-to-be begging to be allowed to enter a monastery, and in the *Life* of Theodora of Thessalonike, the saint's daughter became tonsured aged 6 (Theodora of Thessalonike: 171). This desire to escape from the world, or a parent's desire to protect a child from the world or to give him or her as a gift to God, was a strong current in Byzantine society, and not necessarily to be confused with a lack of affection for the child.

However, the presence of children in monasteries did cause some concern. Society recognized the sexual appeal of young boys, evidenced by banning them from certain monasteries as they were thought to be a threat to the purity of the monks (the

concern was for the monks, not for the boys). In terms of sexuality, children were deemed to be sexually active at the age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys. At these ages, they entered puberty and were permitted to marry, but could be legally betrothed at the age of 7. The restriction on the age of betrothal may have been imposed because the girl would often live in her betrothed's home after the ceremony, and so lose the protection of her parents. Predictably the girl would then be subject to the will of either her fiancé or another member of the household. Fathers did not necessarily protect their daughters, and one is on record as having claimed his 7-year-old was 10 on her betrothal and permitted her marriage the following year. Certainly among the imperial family, the aristocracy, and the wealthy business and professional classes, strategic alliances were made through the children, and the health of a girl could be sacrificed for political, social, or financial gain. A notorious case is that of the 5-year-old imperial daughter, Simonis, who was sent abroad in 1299 to marry the middle-aged Serbian ruler Milutin. After his death, she returned to Constantinople and entered a convent.

A Justinianic law forbade children younger than 10 to be involved in prostitution, implying both that child prostitution was practiced and that after that age it was a legitimate form of work (Patlagean 1973: 86). From looking at the laws which were drawn up to protect children from misuse and at various anecdotal texts, one might surmise that abuse was widespread—though our laws and a survey of the media on any given day would suggest that our own society is as rife with physical, sexual, and psychological abuse of minors. Children aged over 12 were held responsible if they engaged passively in homosexuality, according to a law of 726, suggesting that a child over 12 was responsible for either making a choice to take part or protecting himself from a predator (*Ecloga*, XVII. 38). In other regards children were deemed responsible for their actions from the age of 7 or 10. For instance, under the ninth-century century *Eisagoge*, anyone guilty of murder over the age of 7 could be punished by death, a reform made to the *Ecloga* which prescribed the death penalty for anyone of any age committing premeditated murder.

The Church can well be seen as a nurturing structure and one which provided a viable alternative to family life for those of all ages, whether for oblate children, for orphans needing succor, for young men and women in search of a metier, for widows and widowers, or for those seeking an escape from the world (sometimes for political as well as religious reasons). Evelyne Patlagean has suggested that the family household did not normally contain spinsters or bachelors since the unmarried would become monks or nuns, and widows had the choice of entering a convent or staying at home (Patlagean 1996). While this certainly was the case among the aristocracy and those with sufficient resources, among the poor, single people often stayed within the family. While we have seen that some children were brought up in orphanages and monasteries, the majority lived at home in family settings. Generalizations about the structure of families over such a large period of time, geographical extent and cultural variation are elusive, and evidence suggests that the composition of the *oikos*, the household, varied significantly. Households tended to be based on extended families and were close social structures (Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein 1985: 3–4). However, there was also a complex arrangement of "bloodless" relationships

permeating society, such as fictive kinship (*adelphopoiia*) and patronage. Fictive kinship was integral to the cohesion of Byzantine society, and, while not recognized by the Church, was a form of ritualized friendship that marked, or was intended to encourage, shared friendship and support (Macrides 1990).

Families were widened by the close relation of godparents, whose role could equal or supplant that of family members. Godparents were chosen for their influence and prestige at the time of baptism, and ties between spiritual parent and child would last throughout life. Ties also brought the parents of the child closer to the godparents, and often all the children in a family would share the same godparents. In this way, children were not only dependent on their blood parents but on spiritual parents who might not only give them religious guidance but also serve as advocates on their behalf later in life (Macrides 1987).

Turning to the various transitions that occurred in a child's life, these include both the formal ones which revolved around the Church and the informal ones celebrated with family and friends. Up until the sixth century, children appear to have been baptized at the age of 3 (Taft 1998: 61). Infant baptism was the norm from the sixth century, and children were normally baptized between the eighth and fortieth day after birth, although if they were in imminent danger of death the ceremony was undertaken in the first week (Baun 2006). Often children appear to have been named after saints or holy men and women. In the early period, those baptized as adults were seen as having religious responsibility, but after infant baptism was introduced, baptism no longer correlated with spiritual independence. Well into the Middle Byzantine period, the other rites of initiation, *chrysmation* (related to Western confirmation) and first communion were also celebrated in infancy. In practical terms, therefore, children were full members of the Church, although 10 was apparently considered the age of religious maturity. Before 12, children were not required to confess prior to taking communion, suggesting that only by that age were they considered morally responsible (Patlagean 1973: 88).

Regarding informal rites of passage, babies tended to be weaned at about the age of 3, a practice that both kept down the birth rate and protected children from infections (Moffatt 1986: 717; Fildes 1988: 1–31). They were nursed by their mothers (mostly among the poor) or by wet nurses. The child's first haircut was an occasion to be marked, and the cutting of a boy's first beard and the first binding-up of a girl's hair at puberty were rituals signifying transitions from childhood to maturity (Baun 2006).

In terms of education, the question of literacy among children is still very much open to debate. However, it appears that the majority of children had at least some education either at school or in the home (Kalogeras 2000; Harris 1989, esp. 285–321; Lemerle 1986; Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein 1985: 120–66; Browning 1978). There are instances in hagiographies of children from seemingly poor backgrounds attending school. One such is St Theodore of Sykeon who was the son of a prostitute (Kalogeras 2000: 164–8).

Beyond the basics of reading and writing, Byzantine education combined ancient and Christian teaching, although the degree of Greek and Roman influence varied.

We have seen that children were educated in monastic schools, but these only became common after the eighth century with the integration of secular subjects into the curriculum. Although not so widespread, girls also attended convent schools. Children started their education between the ages of 4 and 7, most often at 7. Primary education continued until about the age of 11 and included the three Rs, with emphasis on memorization of Homer and the Psalms. In the early period, secondary schooling diminished, and even in Constantinople by the seventh century, good teachers were hard to find. Tertiary education completely disappeared, and would-be scholars learned one-on-one with tutors. This changed in the mid-ninth century, when Caesar Bardas (regent 856–66) established the Magnaura school, where philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and grammar were taught. Constantine VII (r.945–59) later refounded this school. However, sources suggest that secondary education, mostly available in Constantinople, still depended in the tenth century on the student–tutor relationship. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the University of Constantinople was founded and maintained by the state, while the Church continued to support schools connected with monasteries. The Latin occupation (1204–61) saw a disruption in secondary education, but it later returned with some new schools being founded in the later period.

Regarding games, it seems that, as now, many children's games revolved around imitating adults. One textual example is the instances in John Moschos's *Spiritual Meadow* of children acting out the Eucharist. Moschos was a monk based at a monastery in the Holy Land who undertook extensive travels and recorded various stories, probably around the year 600. One example reads:

> Some children were pasturing animals about a mile away … As is usually the case, these children wanted to play games the way children do. While they were playing, they said to each other: "Let us have a service and offer the holy sacrifice." They all thought this was a good idea, so they chose one of their number to serve as priest and two others to be deacons. They came to a flat rock and began their game. They placed loaves on the rock which was to serve as an altar and some wine in an earthenware vessel (John Moschos, *Spiritual Meadow* 196).

It turns out that the child acting as priest knew the Prayer of Consecration by heart, for, Moschos tells us, "in those days it was the custom for children to stand before the holy sanctuary during divine worship and to be the first after the clergy to partake of the holy mysteries." He goes on to say that children often learned the prayers from hearing them recited. A further tale in the *Spiritual Meadow* repeats the theme of children acting out of the Eucharist, and another tells how children played at baptizing each other, indicating that this kind of play was a popular *topos* (John Moschos, *Spiritual Meadow*, 197, 227). Are we to assume this play included girls as well as boys and that girls might equally stand close to the sanctuary? Robert Taft has argued that children were present with their mothers in the galleries during the liturgy, but the textual sources do not make this specific (Taft 1998: 62, 87). We know, however, from the hagiography of St Stephen, an eighth-century saint, that

as a boy he accompanied his mother at night vigils and went up close to the chancel to hear better (Stephen the Younger: Auzépy 1997: 97, 188–99, section 8; Taft 1998: 31).

These stories of children copying adult activities are probably indicative of many children's games. Children's toys mimic the possessions of adults, whether toy cars, boats or aeroplanes. Similarly, Byzantine children played with wooden horses and little carts as well as dolls. Other games to survive include rattles and knuckle bones, balls, tops and whistles, many of which are very basic in form. Children, as in the examples in the *Spiritual Meadow*, are adept at making a game out of whatever materials are at hand, and no doubt this was often the case among children with very little.

Games mimicking adult activities are evident in illustrated examples as well. For instance, in the second- or third-century floor mosaics at Piazza Armerina in Sicily, children are shown riding little chariots pulled by birds. This is either a fanciful illusion or possibly an allusion to the toys of wealthy aristocrats. In the floor mosaics that survive from the Great Palace in Constantinople, less prestigious children are shown twirling hoops with a stick around the hippodrome or, at least, around a representation of it. The floor shows boys engaged in various activities, such as cuddling a puppy, tending to animals, riding a camel, and taking part in the hunt. Children also appear at play in manuscript illustrations. For instance in an illustrated copy of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos, boys are shown climbing a tree to pick apples, and a little girl is being pushed on a swing (Hennessy 2008, 63, 65).

Children intending to learn a trade outside the family would become apprenticed, as for instance did Elias of Heliopolis. At the age of 12, he was apprenticed to a carpenter, and worked in the workshop, or *ergasterion*, for which he received a wage (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1907). An interesting line in the *typikon* (foundation document) of the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople refers to a teaching doctor given the task of teaching the children (*paidas*) of the doctors at the hospital. Gautier has translated this as "enfants des médecins" in his French translation, whereas Jordan uses the more expected "student doctors" (Pantokrator typikon: Gautier 1974: 106, line 1314; *BMFD*: 765, rule 55). Is this a case of the offspring of the doctors being taught their father's trade? And at what age?

An incident from Moschos's *Spiritual Meadow* describes the eagerness of a goldsmith's young apprentice to demonstrate his religious fervor and his artistic skill. His master passed on to him a commission he had received to make a gold cross as an offering to the Church. Taking the gold, the boy realized that he could add the gold he would receive for his wages to that given for the cross, and so join in the gift of the offering. When it was made, the man ordering the cross weighed it, and having realized more gold had been added, he was angry. But the boy explained why he had done what he did, and engendered a favorable response. The man, saying, "Did you really think that, child?" adopted him and made him his heir (John Moschos, *Spiritual meadow*, 200). It is difficult to ascertain to what extent young people were directly involved in making artifacts, but it probably happened more often that we would assume.

Children as part of the work force are looked upon nowadays as exploited. But we have no evidence that that was the case in Byzantium. This should perhaps not surprise us, as it was only in 1830 in Britain that children under the age of 9 were banned from working in factories and they were still allowed to work elsewhere; children under 14 were only permitted to work for eight hours a day, but anyone over 14 could work without limit. Byzantine sources imply that age was not really an issue in working life, and it is rarely mentioned. Examples of children working often come from saints' lives, which are notoriously inaccurate as to facts but can indicate generalities about everyday life. For instance, Luke the Younger watched the flocks and worked in the fields with his sister sowing and weeding, and Nikon Metanoeites, whose father was wealthy, oversaw the laborers on the family estate. Similarly, in an urban setting, George, as described in the *Miracles of St Artemios*, was trained as a pawnbroker at the age of 9 (Rotman 2006). Lazaros of Mount Galesion appears to have started his training as an ecclesiastical notary at the age of 9 when he was sent to live with a notary named George; by then he had already spent three years with a priest learning his letters. After three more years, his uncle, who was a monk, took him to his monastery so Lazaros could work as his attendant (Lazaros: Greenfield 2000: 79–80). This appears to be customary in monasteries, where the child novices would undertake menial chores for the monks.

We have evidence that suggests that imperial boys started military training early. Constantine the Great's *vita*, which places him in the guise of saint and cannot be taken literally, states that Constantius, his father, made him a minor commander (*komes*) at the age of 10 (Angelov 2009). In the eleventh century, Theophylaktos of Ohrid advised Michael VII's son, Constantine, when he was about 10 or 12, to take part in military exercises and to learn from his elders. Similarly in his autobiography, the thirteenth-century emperor Michael VIII states that as soon as he was adolescent he became a general and fought. These imply, whether true or not, that it was aspirational for boys to take up military exploits when young. Literature reinforces such practices or ideals: Digenes Akritas, the celebrated hero of the eleventh-century eponymous epic poem, learned the art of warfare in prepubescence, and one version of the late Byzantine *Alexander Romance* featured Aristotle training four hundred children in warfare (Angelov 2009). Modern commenters tend to dismiss as fictional claims that the young took on such seemingly adult roles, but we are perhaps forgetting that Nelson joined the navy at the age of 12, as was normal for boys in 1770. Even today, 16-year-olds are encouraged to join the British Army. As noted by Tom Wall and published in the *New Statesman*:

> The army even runs a web-site called "My Camouflage" (at the cost of £1m) directed at children as young as 13 … Last year, 9,515 teenagers joined the army. Shockingly, 3,225 were only 16 years old—the single largest contribution to the army (21 per cent).

Shocking it may be in the noughties, but historically it was the norm, and children, especially boys, played a much larger part in adult life than is currently, in the West, expected of them.

However, it seems that girls would normally stay within the home, where spinning would be a major occupation, although it is evident that women and girls worked in the fields and would sell their handiwork and their produce at market. Women could invest in real estate and own businesses, mostly with other family members (Laiou 2003: 30–31).

Slavery was a widespread practice in Byzantium, and largely accepted, with the use of slave children being no more abhorrent that that of adults. Children, both girls and boys, were deemed valuable as slaves, indicating that they could work usefully. They were both traded and born into slavery. Boys could became eunuchs. While some children became eunuchs by accident, others were castrated either by their parents' wish or by force (Tougher 1997). Boys were apparently castrated both before and at puberty. Since those operated on after the onset of puberty would retain characteristics of virility, including ejaculation, the operation was more frequently done to young children. While eunuchs were generally reviled by society, they were at times extremely popular at court and rose to power. In fact, eunuchs could gain a high price, and it is part of the complexity of Byzantine society that eunuchs were valued but the act of castration was abhorrent and also outlawed, although the law was poorly enforced. Captured children were castrated and sold as servants or slaves. While a 10-year-old child fetched a price of ten *nomismata*, a castrated child of the same age was worth thirty, and an adult male fetched twenty while an adult eunuch was worth fifty *nomismata* (Guilland 1943; Tougher 1997).

This leads us to the question of emotional relations between children and adults, something about which it is very hard to generalize. One example is that of the eleventh-century historian and courtier, Michael Psellos, who was tutor to the imperial children. He lost his only child, Styliane, when she was 9 years old. He wrote a funeral oration commending her great beauty, purity, and goodness, and expressing the depth of his grief (Kaldellis 2006: 118–38). While much is hyperbolic, the text is revealing about attitudes to young girls and the expectations that parents and society in general had of those born into an aristocratic milieu. From an infant, Styliane chatted with her wet nurses, made girl friends, played with her maidservants and enjoyed childish pleasures. She was taught by both her mother (it is not clear whether this is handiwork or academic learning) and by teachers in a classroom situation with classmates. Her mother started her on working at the loom, moving on to weaving fine linens and learning to embroider clothes using silk thread. She knew the Psalms by heart and chanted them at Vespers, attended Matins and again joined in with the chanters.

Psellos relates that on turning 9, her beauty changed to one of perfection. His description of his daughter would be uncommon today as he appreciates her nascent sexuality, although at the same time he lauds her purity, saying of her eyes that they "shone brightly with the splendor of virginal maidens kept safe at home." For instance, he writes, "Her thighs, next, widened out on either side, inferior in no way to the statue of Aphrodite of Knidos, with which, the myths say, a certain man fell in love and embraced sexually, so taken was he by the beauty of the statue," and of her ankles that they "like a flash of lightning, struck the man who saw them and knocked him out." He describes how her beauty, the way her mantle "clung to and

enveloped all areas of her chest and back," excited in him high hopes of her marriage, but at the time of her death no affiance had been made, although the parents were definitely on the look-out for the right match. His only consolation, in fact, seems to be that she has been saved from "marital pollutions" and the "filth of the flesh."

Love of a child was very much part of Psellos's experience, whether inherently or by acculturation. He wrote of the grief of the entire household and family at Styliane's death; his own wretchedness, he said, outstripped that which he described on his wife's death, for "nothing is more painful than the loss of a child."

Psellos was particularly upset that he had not betrothed his daughter, and after her death it seems he adopted a girl. With this new chance, he betrothed her at about the age of 9, fearing lest he should die before it was accomplished. It was clearly a central duty of the father to assure the future of the daughter. Unfortunately the young man did not behave as Psellos wished, and the engagement was broken (Kaldellis 2006: 139–56).

Psellos was perhaps a "new man," a fact he acknowledged in a letter, writing that "I do have, with regard to learning, perhaps a more masculine disposition, yet with regard to nature I am feminine" (Kaldellis 2006: 172). In another text, one written for his 4-month-old grandson while professedly "holding you in my arms and kissing you insatiably," Psellos delighted over the baby looking cross when his wet nurse straightened his legs in preparation for swaddling, and enjoying his bath: "I often came to see you when you were bathed and became another baby with you as I leaned in close to your tub. You … clutched at me in every way you could, wrapping yourself around me and clinging with all your might …" In a letter written to Konstantinos, nephew of the patriarch Keroularios on the birth of his son, he professed, "Thus … I become excited about newborn babies, especially if they are dearest and of dearest parents, and when I am faced with their delights and charms." He also spoke of making childish figures and funny faces, which is not exactly the accustomed view one has of a Byzantine philosopher (Kaldellis 2006: 173–5).

This is not the view one has of Byzantines at all, and perhaps this is why the topic of children in Byzantium has rested until very recently largely unexplored. An indication of a new interest was the 2006 symposium at Dumbarton Oaks titled "Becoming Byzantine: Children and Childhood In Byzantium" and organized by Arietta Papaconstantinou and Alice-Mary Talbot. The announcement for it summed up the embryonic state of the topic:

> Byzantinists have shown little interest for children and childhood, even after the fin-de-siècle surge of studies on that topic in classical, medieval and early modern studies. Two recently published books and two doctoral dissertations devoted respectively to orphans, childhood disease, children's education, and the visual representation of children, do show an increasing curiosity about the topic. Even so, the bibliography on Byzantine childhood remains a short one, and does not include any substantial general overview.

Why has this topic been "as yet neglected?" This may be partly due to the relative "newness" of Byzantine studies in general, but is more likely related to a perception of Byzantine society that traditionally revolved around emperors, wars, building

projects and religious powers. We have seen a surge of academic interest in women in Byzantium, particularly imperial ones, whose study has encountered many of the features which beset an analysis of childhood, namely the difficulty of approaching a topic with the necessary influence of one's own cultural expectations and assumptions. Similarly, the unearthing of texts written by or about women and artifacts made for or of them has enormously broadened our understanding of their lives. The accessibility of material on children will no doubt become more widespread and greatly enhance our perceptions of not only children but the adult Byzantine world as well.

FURTHER READING

Studies on Byzantine children have been published since the 1970s and have coincided with the general rise in interest in the historiography of childhood. A conference in Paris in 1973 on children and society introduced material on their legal status and the use of children as commodities in familial alliances, to be followed by work on children in relation to women's legal status (Antoniadis-Bibicou 1973: 77–83; Patlagean 1973; Beaucamp 1977). In the 1980s, Patlagean treated the story of Digenes Akritas as a "coming of age" epic (Patlagean 1986). At the same time Moffatt presented a broad overview of childhood, covering marriage, education, children's literature, inheritance and family size, children in monasteries, and child abuse, but with so few references to the biographies, hagiographies, and medical texts used that it does not invite further inquiry (Moffatt 1986).

In the *History of the Family*, the section on Byzantium approached the topic from the legal side, referring to marriage laws and restrictions (Patlagean 1996). A Dumbarton Oaks symposium in 1990 on the Byzantine family and household looked at marriage, adoption, monasteries, hagiography, and the contents of the house, but not specifically at children or childhood, being more concerned with the family as a unit of social organization (*DOP* 44 1990). Angeliki Laiou's extensive work based on legislation and historical texts also refers frequently to children, although it is primarily centered on women (Laiou 1992; see also Laiou 1977). Timothy Miller has written about orphans from legal, ecclesiastical, and monastic standpoints, and Nikolaos Kalogeras has discussed Byzantine childhood and education from the sixth to the ninth centuries, using extensive sources, mostly hagiographic, but also the writings of the church fathers (Miller 1996; Miller 2003; Kalogeras 2000; Kalogeras 2001). Selected papers from the 2006 Dumbarton Oaks Symposium explore children and their lives (Papaconstantinou and Talbot 2009). A further study has taken a broad thematic examination of the imagery of Byzantine children (Hennessy 2008).

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Myrto Hatzaki

Byzantium has largely been seen as a world which valued spirituality over physicality, a culture in whose imagery and writing it is the holy body, not the beautiful body, that one expects to find most represented. Yet a Byzantine discourse on the body in which notions of gender, desire, and sexuality come into play is rapidly emerging through the study of Byzantine imagery and texts in recent scholarship (James (ed.) 1999; Smythe forthcoming). Insight into the physical appearance of the human body and the role of beauty and ugliness as physical attributes may play a part in recovering lost ground for Byzantine bodies and casting new light on how the Byzantines saw themselves and the world around them.

Michael Psellos, describing the appearance of Constantine IX Monomachos in the *Chronographia*, speaks elaborately of the emperor's beauty which he notes rivaled that of the classical heroes Achilles and Nireas. Monomachos was, among other things, "so justly proportioned, so harmoniously fashioned, that there was no one in our time to compare with him": anyone who saw him would proclaim that his head was ruddy like the "sun in its glory, so radiant was it, and his hair (likened) to the rays of the sun, while in the rest of his body he would have seen the purest and most translucent crystal"; his body was "colored the purest white" (Michael Psellos, *Chron.* 6.126–7). Regardless of the accuracy of the information it discloses, Psellos's statement is a valuable one. It describes the emperor as a man of supreme beauty and offers an account of specific features to support this assertion: the physical features praised in Psellos's account emerge as the author's definition of what makes Monomachos's body beautiful, and assuming that the author wished his claim on the emperor's beauty to be credible, it follows that this definition must relate to the views of his audience. That is, that golden-blond hair gleaming like the sun, white skin and good proportions were features associated with physical beauty in the Byzantine mind and part of the image of what a beautiful body should look like.

Setting Psellos's account in the context of Byzantine writing is suggestive. As an author, Psellos discusses physical beauty in his *Chronographia* on numerous occasions, praising, for instance, the well-proportioned, red-cheeked Michael IV or the big-eyed, blond-haired, white-skinned Empress Zoe, just as he dwells on physical beauty in other of his writings, such as his *logos* to his ill-fated daughter Styliane (Leroy-Molinghen 1969). Yet Psellos's interest in descriptions of physical beauty is not exceptional. Byzantine writing provides numerous accounts of the appearance of beautiful bodies in different genres from historiography to literary writing, such as epics and romances; accounts in which the careful description of the appearance of beautiful individuals, men and women alike, helps build an image of Byzantine perceptions of the beautiful body.

In the epic poem of *Digenes Akritas*, the hero is described as a youth "with fair curly hair, large eyes, a white and rosy face, deep black eyebrows" and "a chest like crystal, a fathom broad" who appeared to gleam like the sun when dressed in all his splendor (*Digenes* 4.196–9). The object of Digenes' affection, "the Girl," is similarly a dazzling beauty with a face that gleamed with light, fair and curly hair, black eyebrows, a white face sporting rosy cheeks. The twelfth-century romances paint similar images of their beautiful heroes and heroines. In Theodore Prodromos's *Rodanthi and Dosiklis*, the hero is blond, white skinned and rosy "where he should be," with lovely eyes and brows, full and well-shaped lips, the posture of a cypress and a sturdy build (Prodromos, *RD* 4.213–26). The beautiful Rodanthi has skin white as snow, harmonious limbs and perfect semi-circle brows. Upon her cheeks, two perfect snow-white circles contain within them two red ones fired-up "by the flame burning within them" (Prodromos, *RD* 1.40–57). Her curly hair resembles ivy, her body, well formed and straight, appears like a cypress and a wild vine (Prodromos, *RD* 6.291–4). In Niketas Eugenianos's *Drosilla and Chariklis* the descriptions of hero and heroine are strikingly similar: they possess golden, curly hair and a glowing complexion of white and rosy skin (Eugenianos 1.124–6, 134–8, 145–50).

Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, eloquent in its physical descriptions of characters, paints a similar image of beauty. The beauty of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos resides in his well-proportioned body, his ruddy complexion and brilliant gaze (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 3.3.2). Empress Eirene is perfectly symmetrical, with the body of a harmoniously built young sapling, bright faced with rosy cheeks and beautiful blue eyes (*Alexiad* 3.3.3). Among the many laudatory pen portraits of male beauty, which include Anna's husband Nikephoros Bryennios, Michael Doukas, Constantine Doukas and the Westerners Robert Guiscard and his son, Bohemond, the latter two are particularly evocative. Robert is described as a handsome figure, taller than other men, with a rosy complexion, blond hair, broad shoulders, eyes shining like fire, and a perfectly harmonious body (*Alexiad* 1.9.4). Bohemond, moreover, is "a wonder for the eyes to behold," tall and well built, broad shouldered, strong chested, slim waisted and well proportioned, he is white skinned and rosy, with brilliant blue eyes (*Alexiad* 13.10.4). His hair is blond but his beard would be ruddy were it not that he shaved, leaving his skin "smooth like polished marble."

An Ideal of Beauty

Set against one another, such descriptions suggest a recurring image of physical beauty in Byzantium, an oft-repeated, ideal image of what constitutes the beautiful body: blond or ruddy-haired, white-skinned and rosy-cheeked, well-proportioned and brilliant-eyed beautiful men and women are instantly recognizable and appear identical in all but the manly emphasis on sturdy build, which is reserved for physical accounts of men. The repetitive nature of this ideal could in itself be seen as problematic. Of Anna Komnene's pen-portraits in the *Alexiad*, it has been noted that they "can be easily dismantled into details" consisting of a detailed list of physical features and thus, like Psellos's pen-portraits too, they have been described as "conventional and stereotyped rather than specific, conforming to an ideal" (Ljubarskij 2000: 179). If, however, Byzantine pen portraits of (beautiful) characters can be "easily dismantled into details" following the traditional rhetorical imagery of Byzantine authors, this suggests not that the Byzantines could not write differently about beauty but that this mode of expression was somehow suited to their perception of beauty as an attribute of the human body. Clichéd or otherwise, the often repeated ideal of beauty in Byzantium must thus, like all clichés, encapsulate some "pertinent truth" about Byzantine attitudes towards beautiful bodies.

In fact, the Byzantine ideal of beauty outlined in writing clearly suggests that Byzantines saw beauty as made up of certain set, "beautiful" features. Beauty, it seems, could be measured by reference to the pieces that make up the whole. Through the Byzantine ideal of beauty and its characteristics emerges a set of criteria with which physical perfection is judged. The question is to what extent this notion of what makes a beautiful body changed over time in the span of Byzantine history. The evidence of fourteenth-century romances, stories of tormented lovers like *Velthandros and Chrysandza* and *Kallimachos and Chrysorroi*, for instance, suggests there is little change in attitudes towards the beautiful body from those found in their eleventh- and twelfth-century counterparts (on the romances, Beaton 1996: 144–50). The beautiful hero Velthandros is blond and curly haired, with beautiful eyes and a chest white like cold marble. His beloved Chrysandza shines with a share of the moon's brilliance, her body perfectly crafted, her hair blond, her eyebrows black and shaped like bridges, her cheeks and lips a blossoming red, her hands white, her body slender (*Diegisis* 680–704). In the world of *Kallimachos and Chrysorroi*, the beautiful heroine possesses rivers of curls shining like the golden rays of the sun, a body white like crystal, and rosy cheeks mixing in the whiteness of her skin. (*Kallimachon* 811–16)

Nikephoros Gregoras's fourteenth-century *Romaiki Historia*, falling in with the ideal of beauty, dwells on perfect proportions as a praised attribute of the beautiful body. The young wife of Constantine Palaiologos is described as a woman adorned with much harmony of face, making her an incomparable beauty who inflamed men with love even from afar (Nikephoros Gregoras, *History* 8.3.2). John, son of Constantine Palaiologos, is exalted for his stature, the symmetry of his body, and the

cheerfulness in his eyes which would draw all gazes upon him (Nikephoros Gregoras, *History* 7.11.2). In Niketas Choniates' thirteenth-century *History*, praise for the beauty of characters echoes the familiar features of the ideal: the handsome Renier of Montferatt had hair that gleamed like the sun; the young Anna, daughter of Louis VII, is described as "red cheeked and tender;" while Manuel's wife, the beautiful Maria of Antioch, is likened to golden Aphrodite and the white-armed and big-eyed (ox-eyed) Hera (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 2.5, 4.1, 2.3).

If notions of what constitutes beauty appear to shift little between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, more crucial is the fact that the perception of beauty as made up of individual features constituting a whole also remains unchanged. Beauty in the Byzantine mind, it seems, can always be measured by reference to a set of criteria on the basis of which perfection was judged. The romance of *Velthandros and Chrysandza* makes this point explicit by presenting the hero presiding over a beauty-show held in the Castle of Love. Velthandros dismisses the beautiful contestants in turn, commenting on a single physical fault which deprives them of victory: the first has blurry eyes, the second fat lips, the third is dark-skinned, the fourth possesses brows that join in the middle of her forehead, the fifth leans forward as she walks, the sixth is fat, the seventh crooked-toothed (*Diegisis* 555–658). A single fault in each case condemns the otherwise beautiful girls until the hero is left with only three: he dismisses the first for her hairy arms, the next for her sunken eyes, and deems only the last (unsurprisingly the well-proportioned, golden-haired, rosy-cheeked, and ruby-lipped heroine Chrysandza) as fairest of them all.

Throughout this literary beauty contest, Velthandros appears to check each girl on the basis of an ideal against which their imperfect bodies are measured feature by feature, the whole condemned by a fault in one single part. A similar, if reversed, attitude is traced in Psellos's *Chronographia*, where the author describes how the beautiful part may lend an otherwise plain body traces of beauty. Describing the Alanian princess held hostage in the court of Constantine IX Monomachos, Psellos notes that "she was not outstandingly beautiful, and few suitors asked for her hand in marriage" but that "two attributes lent her special charm—the whiteness of her skin and the brilliance of her very beautiful eyes" (Michael Psellos, *Chron.* 6.151). These features were not enough to make the young Alanian hostage a true beauty, but, Psellos admits with a hint of displeasure, they sufficed for Constantine, who forsook all other mistresses for this one. Beauty in the world of Psellos, as much as in that of Kallimachos, is made up of individual features: it is defined by a set of established criteria and it is checked against an ideal.

It is this attitude that seems to run as a constant in Byzantine thinking found, for instance, in beauty contests held in a time-frame, milieu, and context far removed from the world of *Velthandros and Chrysandza*. The eighth- and ninth-century imperial bride-shows, the historicity of which has been much debated, also present women tried for beauty against set standards (Herrin 2001; Treadgold 2004; Vinson 2004). The *Life* of St Philaretos the Almsgiver (c.821–2) speaks of a show supposedly held to select a suitable bride for Constantine VI. The imperial judges touring the empire examining the beauty of prospective candidates scrutinize the saint's three granddaughters, following the Empress's instructions. Maria, Myranthia and Euanthia are

put through three tests, measuring their height against an ideal measure, comparing their faces to an ideal portrait and measuring their shoes against an ideal shoe size (Treadgold 1979: 398). Feet may not receive particular emphasis as part of the often-repeated ideal of beauty of later centuries; but Byzantine bodies continue to be measured, feature by feature against an ideal.

The Other Side of the Coin: the Ugly

In the negative selection process by which Velthandros picks Chrysandza out of the 40 beautiful contestants set before him, the hero's comments introduce physical fault and thus also ugliness as a foil against which the beauty of Chrysandza can be judged and found superior. Yet though ugliness appears as the antithesis of beauty, defining the ugly in Byzantium is less than straightforward. To Chrysandza's beautiful eyes and arching brows the author juxtaposes a variety of shortcomings in the other candidates: the blurry eyes of one girl, the "drowning," sunken, and watery eyes of another, the joining brows of a third which meet in the middle of her forehead. To the familiar, ideal beauty attributed to Chrysandza is thus juxtaposed the variety of features that condemn the other girls, confirming that while beauty occupies a narrow band, ugliness has infinite variety.

Gregoras's *Romaiki Historia* repeats an admonition that authors must imitate the skills of good painters: should they see a natural fault in the prototype they seek to represent, such as a part of the body being either larger or smaller than it should be, they should avoid rendering it in their image in order not allow the ugliness of the prototype, this "shame of nature," to be recorded in the imagery for perpetuity, leaving the sitter open to ridicule (Nikephoros Gregoras, *History* 1.1.2). The well-proportioned body, so crucial to the Byzantine definition of beauty, is easily defined; the possible variety of ill-proportioned combinations requiring the artist's intervention in adjusting the size of offending body-parts is endless. But the more crucial point made by Gregoras's remark is on the contemporary perception of ugliness as a shame of nature which would leave the painted figure open to ridicule for perpetuity. How was the ugly viewed in Byzantium?

The link between ugliness and ridicule is exploited in Byzantine writing. Dark skin, for instance, regarded as an undesirable physical feature, appears in Anna Komnene's description of her hated baby brother John in the *Alexiad* (*Alexiad* 6.8). Somewhat more objective, in that it records a nickname and thus popular attitudes, rather than the author's personal bias, is the twelfth-century historian John Zonaras's reference to "dark Theodore," called "Gypsy-Theodore (*Antzypotheodoros*) because of his dark complexion," in the *Epitome Historion* (Zonaras 16.28). Byzantine nicknames often draw on undesirable physical traits such as dark skin or obesity, the latter equally regarded as a source of ridicule. When Choniates speaks of John Komnenos the Fat in his *History*, he revels in a vivid description of John as "potbellied and with a body shaped like a barrel" briefly settling into the palace: "overcome by thirst because he was so corpulent, he emptied out whole jars of water, spouting like a dolphin, and boiled off the droops of perspiration that gushed forth as from a spring and

evaporated from the heat" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 6.2). Ephraim Ainios, retelling the same story in his *Chronographia*, equally heaps ridicule on the usurper's obesity, which he even aligns to his eventual demise: double-chinned and shaped like a barrel, "fat in body and fat in the brain," John settled in the palace and greedily drinking a great deal of wine left the doors unlocked, leading to his capture and execution (Ephraim Ainios 6580–5, 6602–4).

Baldness, a physical flaw which comes into contrast with the Byzantine fascination with beautiful locks, also serves as the butt of Byzantine jokes (on ugliness and laughter see Garland 1995: 74–5). Choniates describes the populace howling with laughter at the sight of John Doukas's bald head gleaming in the sun "brighter than the full moon," while he notes mockingly that Andronikos I Komnenos's head appeared "balder than an egg" in his disgrace in the Hippodrome (Garland 1990: 17). Byzantium is the world in which ugliness is a source of amusement for others, where the obese, the bald, the dark-skinned are ridiculed, where jesters are ugly men. The jester in the court of emperor Theophilos is a figure "uglier than Thersitis," the Homeric anti-hero, in Ephraim Ainios (Ephraim Ainios 2352–3), while Choniates describes Zintziphitzes as "a most hideous looking little man … most of his limbs were disproportionate, and he was small in stature and corpulent … a consummate actor who provoked laughter" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 4.1).

Ugliness, linked to ridicule in Byzantine writing, also served as a source of abuse. John Tzetzes' colorful *Letters* (c.1135–60) particularly made this point: "Dispose of this snotty man, who is a horribly ugly, disgusting homosexual and who is dumber and more stupid than fish," he wrote to the *sebastos* Isaac Komnenos (Tzetzes 6). Launching a personal attack on the anonymous recipient of another letter, Tzetzes viciously compared his correspondent to the ugly Homeric Thersitis, who "filtered into poetry like a monster that resembles you both in physical appearance and in manner" (Tzetzes 20). Tzetzes' abusive comments associate physical ugliness with other, non-physical, shortcomings in the character's moral fibre, intellectual capacity, social standing or conduct, aligning ugliness with the vile, the low-born, the immoral and the unintelligent; yet ugliness clearly ranks highly in Tzetzes' arsenal of abuse, suggesting a society whose attitudes towards ugliness would make this kind of abuse hurtful.

Aligned with ridicule and serving as a source of abuse, ugliness was perceived as a form of social stigma in Byzantium. In the romance of *Rodanthi and Dosiklis*, the hero Dosiklis claims that he is worthy of beautiful Rodanthi's attention as "my face is not incomparable [to hers]. Nor am I strange and unsociable. For as a man, I too, am beautiful in appearance" (Prodromos, *RD* 2.2.251–2). Dosiklis's reference to the "strange" and "unsociable" nature of ugliness can only make sense in a world in which ugliness was linked to social stigmatization. In another part of the story, a debate over beauty which takes place at the sacrificial altar, as the barbarous pirate king Bryaxis proposes to sacrifice the hero to the gods, makes a similar point. Bryaxis notes that the gods "who find beauty pleasing and despise what is ugly" are only satisfied with the best of offerings: when sacrificing men, therefore, must one "offer a lame or a blind man, a shaky and snotty old man with a hunched back and no teeth, a bald man or a hairy, pasty figure who reeks from afar" or rather beautiful

youths at their peak, like Dosiklis and his companion Kratandros? (Prodromos *RD* 7.428–40). In this case, the Byzantine perception of ugliness as a form of social stigma is betrayed by association, as the words of Bryaxis align the ugly with the deformed and the disabled.

Bryaxis's association between ugliness and disability is one for which there is much evidence in Byzantium. In the story of *Kallimachos and Chrysorroi*, for instance, the female villain, an evil witch whose magic helps Kallimachos's rival, the king of Egypt, abduct the beautiful heroine, is notably described as both "ugly in form" and as a crutch-bearing cripple (*Kallimachon* 1065–90). Such statements are particularly evocative of views on ugliness as they are set in the context of a society which regarded physical mutilation (which both disfigures and disables the body) as an accepted form of judicial penalty. Byzantium appears as a world in which physical disability was a metaphor for punishment (Vlachogiannis 1998: 14): it is the world in which Emperor Justinian II went down in history as the *Rinotmetos* ("cut-nose" after his nose was slit by his rivals), or where, Choniates implied, only the base Stephen Hagiochristophorites could flaunt his slit nose instead of avoiding the ridicule that such disfigurement naturally provoked (Garland 1990: 18). Choniates also noted that Andronikos I Komnenos, who was particularly skilled in humiliating those who had suffered repulsive physical deformities, mocked sultan Kilij Arslan, calling him "Koutz-Arslan" ("Halt-Arslan"), for he was not "a physically well-proportioned man but maimed" in several parts of the body. This comment evocatively aligns the ugliness of the poorly proportioned body with disfigurement and disability, presenting them as causes of shame and ridicule and social stigma (Choniates, *Hist.* 2.3).

Beauty between Good and Evil

If ugliness was aligned to ridicule, and attributed to witches and usurpers in Byzantine writing, the question is how evocative this is of Byzantine beliefs on the relationship between physical appearance and the moral character of an individual. With regard to beauty can one safely say that, in the classical tradition of *kalos k' agathos*, the beautiful and the good, there is an effortless alignment between physical beauty and inner, moral goodness in Byzantium? On a more abstract level, was beauty truly perceived as a benign, good quality in its own right?

Byzantine visual imagery in the form, for instance, of an eleventh-century calendar icon from the Monastery of St Catherine's, Sinai, makes a telling point in this respect. Among the 91 small scenes representing the various feast days from September 1 to November 30 which are illustrated on the icon are numerous scenes depicting the martyrdom of saints (Figure 8.1) (Manafis 1990: 99, 147). Reduced to its essentials, each of these scenes sets saints and their executioners against each other and in doing so juxtaposes good against evil, holy figures against unholy executioners.

The martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas (October 6) and that of St Demetrios (October 26) respectively set the figure of the saint against the dark silhouette of a spear-bearing executioner rendered as a human figure painted solely in black. The image of these pitch-black characters holds associations for Byzantine viewers. In

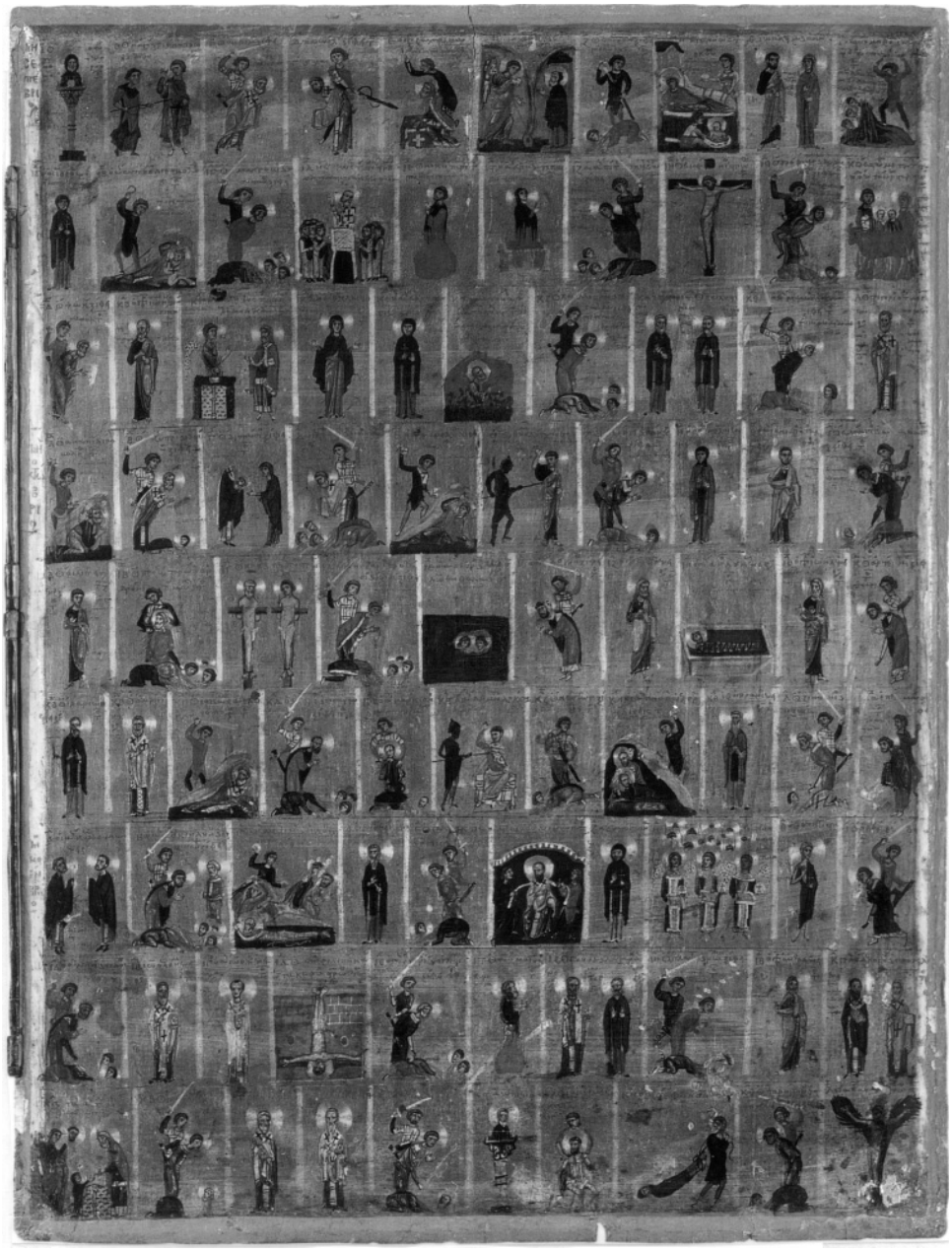

Figure 8.1. *Calendar icon illustrating the feast days for the months of September to November*, eleventh century.

Byzantine imagery and writing and in the collective imagination of Byzantine viewers it was demons, though theoretically bodiless and able to materialize in any form, who appeared as dark silhouettes, often in the guise of dark-skinned Arabs or Ethiopians (on demons, Greenfield 1988). In visual imagery, they are rendered as featureless, pitch-black characters seen, for instance, in the Klimachos icon from Mount Sinai (Figure 8.2) (Cormack 1997: 160–62). The icon illustrates St John Klimakos's treatise on the *Heavenly Ladder* describing the steps that lead a monk to heaven, though it is clear that some of the monks will not attain salvation, as they fall prey to the machinations of the devils: winged figures in human form painted solely in black, these demons attack the monks, shoot arrows at them, or pull them off their course with the aid of ropes.

To the Byzantines, the devil's blackness was linked to ugliness, as looking upon demonic figures caused revulsion: in the *Life* of St Andrew the Fool, the black figures of demons are reported as "striking terror mixed with disgust" into beholders (Andrew 1519–20; Rydén 114). The black silhouettes of executioners in the calendar icon lack the wings of the fallen angels in the Klimakos icon yet echo the familiar image of demons in their visual vocabulary. It seems that the physical appearance of the figures, their blackness, which is aligned with the physically revolting appearance of demons, is to be linked with their vile act, underlining the pointed visual juxtaposition between executioners and saints.

In the scene for September 17, setting the young executioner against the figures of SS Pistis, Elpis, and Agape creates a very different impression. Here, the beardless figure of the executioner is painted with hair arranged in rows of tight, neat curls and an elegant, oval-shaped face carefully illuminated on the right by soft lighting which accentuates its contour. The hair and facial features of the three saintly figures, by contrast, appear to have been more broadly painted, to the extent that it seems the artist has lavished more attention on the carefully rendered figure of the youthful executioner than on the heads of his three saintly victims. In the case of the sword-wielding executioner for October 14, moreover, the carefully rendered wavy locks and finely painted face of the figure visually align him to the soon-to-be decapitated saint before him, as the two are rendered with facial features notably similar in their handling. This figure, like many of the executioners in the icon, is also distinguished by his elaborate armor. Gold, used sparingly for other figures on the icon, appears on the armor and dress of numerous executioners, creating a striking decorative effect, a significant gesture in a world in which fine dress and armor was much valued, as elaborate descriptions of such finery in texts from *Digenes Akritas* to the poetry of Theodore Prodromos indicate (*Digenes* 4.219–40; Prodromos *Hist. Ged.* 44.68–80, 44.150–55).

Finely painted and elaborately clad executioners also appear in Byzantine imagery in scenes illustrating stories such as the *Massacre of the Innocents*, which presents evil executioners, suitably termed "merciless wild beasts" by John of Euboa, in the vile act of dismembering helpless infants (Maguire 1981: 27). In the scene from the church of Prophet Elias, Thessalonike (c.1360–70), for instance, the prominent foreground figure of a spear-bearing youth is particularly striking. He is rendered with wavy hair marked by clearly distinguishable honey-colored striations, large eyes,

Figure 8.2. *The Heavenly Ladder of John Klimakos*, twelfth century.

Figure 8.3. Executioner, detail from the *Massacre of the Innocents*, wall-painting, c.1360–70, Church of the Prophet Elias, Thessalonike.

arching black brows, a touch of color on the cheeks and lips, a carefully illuminated oval face, and splendid armor (Figure 8.3). If the notion of a "beautiful executioner" was not an impossibility in the Byzantine mind, then among artists and viewing public alike evil deeds are not necessarily aligned to ugliness or physical stigmatization.

Byzantine writing presents a similarly ambiguous image of beauty disassociated from the moral character of individuals. In the epic of *Digenes Akritas*, it was not only the hero and heroine who were portrayed as beautiful characters. Digenes was described as "by all the favors of Christ enriched, beauty and bravery, wisdom and much daring," but this divine gift of beauty was also bestowed upon Maximou, the female warrior who dared to challenge Digenes in battle (*Digenes* 6.336–7). The story thus portrayed an image of a beautiful anti-heroine who broke away from the

acceptable norms of female virtue exemplified by the Girl, Digenes' wife, thereby problematizing the simple alignment between beauty and moral goodness.

As the storyline evolves, moreover, it is clear that despite being a gift of Christ, beauty is nevertheless not necessarily a blessing on the recipient, a fact which portrays beauty in a questionable light as a quality on its own right. After defeating Maximou in battle, Digenes is then defeated by her charms, with dramatic results. Checked by his wife and burdened by a guilty conscience, Digenes returns and kills Maximou in remorse for his adultery (*Digenes* 6.795–8). Maximou's beauty is thus both the cause of Digenes' sin and a fatal blessing for Maximou herself. Ascribed to heroes as much as to anti-heroes, physical beauty is both the cause of love between Digenes and the Girl but also the source of sin and murder. The lament on the evils of beauty voiced in Prodromos's *Rodanthi and Dosiklis* as the handsome young hero faces Bryaxis's sacrificial blade could not have been more apt: "O evil beauty, evil gift of the gods, it would be better that the beautiful were not born so, if they must die because of their beauty" (Prodromos, *RD* 7.329–31). In the romance, beauty is both a divine gift, "the most valuable blessing for human beings," and what leads Dosiklis before the sacrificial altar (Prodromos, *RD* 2. 216–17).

In Byzantine historical writing, beauty equally appears both as a questionable quality on its own right and as an attribute of less than virtuous characters. Zonaras's *Epitome Historion* notes that in the nation of the Abasgians, the birth of a beautiful boy brought great misfortune upon a family, as beautiful boys were abducted by the state and sold as eunuchs to Byzantium, and their fathers were slain to prevent them avenging the wrong (Zonaras 15.1). The *Epitome Historion* also offers accounts of numerous characters who combined physical beauty with a wicked character. Basil I was "beautiful, tall, brave, and a good soldier, and he had long and curly hair:" he earned the good will of Michael III, and was taken into his service, a favor he repaid by murdering his benefactor and taking his throne (Zonaras 16.6). Similarly, the empress Theophano started life as a low-born, worthless woman, but being "most beautiful, a perfect statue of nature," she married emperor Nikephoros Phokas and then deceived him with the beautiful John Tzimiskes (Zonaras 16.21). The latter, though "outstanding in beauty and with a body covered in physical blessings," was no better a character: Zonaras describes in detail how, taking the throne by force, Tzimiskes humiliated, gruesomely tortured, and finally killed emperor Nikephoros.

Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* juxtaposes beautiful heroes such as Alexios, Eirene, and Bryennios, with handsome villains, both physically beautiful and morally reprehensible. The Normans Robert and Bohemond are both presented as bloodthirsty, ruthless, and treacherous villains with no loyalties, yet they receive elaborate praise for their good looks. The ungrateful Nikephoros Diogenes, who repeatedly attempted to murder Alexios and usurp his throne, despite, as Anna notes, having been treated like a son by the emperor, receives a particularly laudatory pen-portrait that accounts for his physical beauty and his outstanding sportsmanship (*Alexiad* 9.6.5). In Choniates' *History*, the best example of a handsome yet villainous character is Andronikos I Komnenos, a man portrayed as capable of incest, murder, and tyranny over his people, yet described as having a physique "worthy of empire:" he was blessed "with a wondrous comeliness, like a young shoot climbing up a fir tree" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 2.4).

Byzantine historical writing, this evidence suggests, had no misgivings about discussing, often elaborately, the beauty of morally reprehensible characters.

Byzantine hagiographical writing equally creates a complex image of beauty, whether ascribed to saints or to sinners. In the *Life of St Theodore of Edessa*, a virtuous young monk from Mar-Saba is attacked by the evil queen Seida: the virtuous monk and his lustful, would-be seducer are both described as beautiful, yet the former is not deceived by the comeliness of the queen, who "appears ugly, dirty, and despicable" to his eyes (Vasiliev 1942–3).The beauty of a saint may be even more treacherous, as the story of St Nilus of Rossano vividly illustrates: described as a man so beautiful that he was plagued by lust-filled women, St Nilus eventually submits to the most beautiful among them. Kazhdan notes that "human beauty was ambivalent; it could reflect the beauty of the soul and, on the contrary, it could deceptively cover the spiritual ugliness of a man" (Kazhdan 1990: 135). It may be, however, that accounts discussing the beauty of characters in Byzantine writing were intended neither to reveal nor to mask an individual's spiritual or moral character, and that beauty was discussed regardless of a character's inner self, virtuous or otherwise.

Byzantine writing, whether literary texts, hagiography or historiography, and Byzantine imagery both disassociate the outer, physical beauty of individuals from their character, a fact which suggests the Byzantines detached beauty from moral connotations. If beauty does not appear as a visual manifestation of a commendable inner self, then it appears as a quality in its own right, betraying a Byzantine fascination with beauty as a quality worthy of attention on its own merit. More importantly, however, it also suggests a perception of beauty as a quality which does not appear as inherently benign or evil but as one conditioned by its context: beauty in Byzantium was neither good nor bad in itself, but neutral.

Beauty and Power

Discussed as a quality in its own right, beauty must have been regarded as a factor of considerable importance in Byzantium. The tradition of bride-shows hints at that much already in the eighth and ninth centuries, recounting ostensibly historical situations in which physical beauty (possibly but not necessarily alongside moral goodness or breeding) is the legitimate criterion for imperial bride selection. Such stories, echoed in the literary world of fourteenth-century romances, suggest that it clearly mattered to be good looking in Byzantium. But why?

The discussion of beauty's ambiguous position between good and evil makes a crucial point in this respect. Benign or damning, beauty appears not as a passive but as an active quality: a force to be reckoned with, with the ability to stir both emotion and action. In the context of Byzantine historical writing, we are told by Zonaras that it was the beauty of Basil I that paved his way to the throne, it was beauty too which made Theophano empress, led her into the arms of Tzimiskes, and brought about the downfall of the emperor Nikephoros. Zonaras suggests that the exceptional beauty of Michael IV inflamed the empress Zoe and played a vital part in her husband's murder. Psellos's *Chronographia* too explicitly tells readers that it was physical

beauty that paved Michael IV's way to the throne (Michael Psellos, *Chron.*3, 19–20). Attaleiates describes how the beauty of Romanos Diogenes brought tears to the eyes of the empress Eudokia, swayed her heart to pity and to sparing Romanos's life, and, eventually, to crowning him emperor (Attaleiates 100).

A similar example in a different context is found in Choniates, where he describes how the evil emperor Andronikos I ordered that the public, painted images of empress Xene, the previous emperor's mother, whom he had ordered to be strangled, were to be painted over "so that she appeared as a shriveled-up old woman because he was suspicious of the pity elicited by these radiant and very beautiful portrayals worthy of the admiration of the passers-by" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 4.2). Beauty represented in images, being equally dangerous and powerful as the real thing, led Andronikos to take action against it in order to protect his throne. Where Choniates gives a potent example of fear over the power of beauty, Gregoras offers a harrowing tale of beauty instigating fateful jealousy: blinded by erotic passion, Andronikos III ordered the murder of the "young Adonis," the dazzling youth involved with Andronikos's mistress, and ended up killing his own brother Manuel, who chanced to be outside her door, by mistake (Nikephoros Gregoras, *History* 8.1). It seems that in the Byzantine mind, beauty was power: damning, seductive, or benevolent.

Though beauty's role in unleashing abominable passions was often discussed in elaborate detail, its power in the realms of love and, perhaps surprisingly, in that of politics too was equally pronounced. "Manganeios" Prodromos writes of John, eldest son of Eirene Komnene, that "you (the bridegroom) shoot at the maiden from your eyes like Eros; your beauty is your weapon and the fire of passion your curling locks," describing beauty in the realm of love as a militant force (Jeffreys 1983: 478). Choniates too makes it clear that beauty could be instrumental in securing a good marriage. Constantine Angelos, a man "not descended from a very eminent and noble family" but "robust in stature and graced with a handsome bloom on his face," married into the imperial family, "fortunate in having his comeliness serve as matchmaker" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 2.2).

Byzantine authors also appear to agree that beauty could influence the hearts of the people, and often those in authority too, paving a man's way to actual, political power. Synadenos in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* and Mizizios in Zonaras's *Epitome Historion* rose to the imperial throne by virtue of their good looks, which held sway over the populace as much as over emperors themselves. Anna describes how the handsome and treacherous Nikephoros Diogenes was "a broad-chested, blond man, a head taller than others of his generation … It was this, more than anything else, that won him the favor of the people;" influencing more than just the simple-minded populace: "he even beguiled the husband of the Empress's sister" (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 9.6.5).

This link between physical beauty and power in the political sphere is also made explicit by Choniates, who notes that beauty could incite the jealousy of tyrants: "Should there exist someone endowed with the beauty of a statue and the lyrical eloquence of a nightingale … the wearer of the crown can neither sleep nor rest … with a wicked tongue he curses the creator nature for fashioning others suitable to rule and for not making him the first and last and the fairest of men." (Niketas Cho-

niates, *Hist.* 2.4) Such evil rulers slay the best of men so that they may rule undisturbed and lay their state to waste. Beauty is power, Choniates suggests, to such an extent that those in power are naturally predisposed to fear it.

Byzantine attitudes towards beauty and ugliness affect the emerging image of the Byzantine body. As it appears in Byzantine writings, the Byzantine ideal of beauty evokes a world in which beauty was valued and discussed, beautiful bodies easily defined by the ideal beautiful features of which they consisted, ugly bodies distinguished by the diversity of their imperfections. A discussion of beauty in Byzantium draws a distinction between inner self and outward appearance, suggesting the Byzantines detached the beauty of individuals from their moral character. Beauty told viewers nothing about a character, whether "real," fictive or painted. Neither good nor evil in itself, moreover, beauty was neutral: it was painted and described *per se*, as a valued quality on its own right. Beauty in Byzantium was related only to power: from the sphere of love to that of politics, its power could be both benign and terrible, conditioned by circumstance.

FURTHER READING

Scholarship in recent years has cast the human body in Byzantium in a new light by acknowledging the relevance of notions such as physicality, eroticism, and "desire" to the study of Byzantine bodies; a key reading is James (ed.) 1999. The question of beauty as an attribute of the human body is addressed in Hatzaki 2009. Beauty as a quality on its own right is also reclaiming its rightful place in art historical discourse, a point raised by Prettejohn 2005.

CHAPTER NINE

The Memory Culture of Byzantium

Amy Papalexandrou

"Memory and Oblivion, all hail! Memory I say in the case of good things, and Oblivion in the case of evil" (*Greek Anthology*: bk 10 no. 67). So wrote Macedonios Consul, a high-ranking imperial official and composer of epigrams, sometime in the first half of the sixth century AD. As the poet himself told us in a *lemma*, or subtitle, he composed his literary quip in a dream (Madden 1995: 215), which is to say that the anxiety about things remembered or forgotten was deeply ingrained in his psyche, so deep as to penetrate his subconscious dream world and inspire quick action (he wrote it down) upon awakening. The consul's homage is an ideal starting point, for it plainly states the obvious: that memory and its perpetuation lay at the heart of virtually every effort and project undertaken by the Byzantines. It was in fact so integral to this society that those of us who study it mostly take the issue for granted. A look through the index of nearly any book devoted to the Byzantines will make this clear: One will be hard pressed to find an entry for "memory" or its affiliates (memento, *mneme, memoria*), apparently because the intensity and ubiquity of this process in Byzantium have been considered so obvious as to obviate the need for a dedicated discussion.

This essay concerns one aspect of the various types of memory-work, that of "inscribed memory," as part of the notion that acts of memory formed the backbone of Byzantine life. It is an immense topic, and I cannot hope to do it justice in these pages. I intend the following as a modest effort to suggest directional lines for thinking about Byzantine memory in the future, and I hope to expose some of the issues surrounding those commemorative acts that were a vital part of existence at all levels within Byzantine society. In its most basic manifestation, these can be detected within the plethora of short-term memory tools, or mnemonics, that were frequently employed as a kind of "assistive technology" in daily life. It is also present in the evocative power of the senses, to which no Byzantine was immune, and the power of sensory stimulation to transport the mind, through memory, to different times and places. In these pages, I focus primarily on the underlying impulses that guided

individuals in their attempts to commemorate themselves or others. Here, it is often the written record which, together with accompanying oral utterances, comprised a more stable platform for the perpetuation of memory. By far the most important stimulus for commemoration was the intense interest in eternity and the problem of one's enduring reputation over time, whether for earthly posterity or for personal salvation in the afterlife, or both. In fact, if we are to believe the written records left behind for us, the typical Byzantine, whether rich or poor, high-born or peasant, was altogether consumed by the desire and need to perpetuate his or her own memory in the face of the harmful and potentially damning effects of the three great enemies of time (*chronos*), envy (*phthonos*), and, above all, human forgetfulness (*lethe*).

Categories of Memory

Byzantine perceptions of memory were implicitly tied to the aforementioned threatening concepts, and the presence of any one of them in a text or inscription should immediately signal to the reader that notions of memory and oblivion are at hand. These enemies were understood as ever-present, supernatural powers, the vanquishing of which required constant vigilance. It was a practical matter, intimately tied to notions of salvation and one's fate in the afterlife (Constas 2006). One simply needed to protect oneself. This was accomplished on the one hand through the hard work of performing commemorative practices and fulfilling various duties, many of which were prescribed by the Church and defied social and educational distinctions. On the other hand there was the "secular" (to the extent we can use this term for the Byzantines) desire or tendency to leave an earthly record of oneself and one's accomplishments for human posterity. In modern-day parlance, such memory acts have sometimes been distinguished from one another and categorized as either "bodily" (personal, ritual, and experiential) or "inscribed" (shared, social, and often permanent) practices (Connerton 1989). Although the former, often referred to as "embedded" memory, are not the subject of this essay, it is worth emphasizing here the critical role of such practices within Byzantine society.

Connerton (1989) explained the notion of "embedded" memory as something deeply personal, ingrained, and experiential, as opposed to those practices (like inscribing and writing) that belong to a larger, group narrative. The act of genuflection, for example, or participation in liturgical ceremonies, or even baking bread according to a traditional method, these are all examples of what we would consider "bodily" practices according to our modern distinctions. This kind of embedded memory was the life force of Byzantine culture (as it is with any culture), and it was manifest in the Byzantine body through ways that are tangible across a spectrum of behaviors and sensory experiences. The most obvious place for memorial encounters was the contextual space of the Church and the activities inspired or mandated by the Orthodox faith. With its array of rich, expansive rites and liturgies, its lush music and chant, the intense fragrances, brilliantly colored images, distinct tastes, and panoply of carefully orchestrated sounds and lights, this "memory theater" existed as a unique environment for commemorative activity within the standard routines of

daily life. It was a highly complex arena, designed specifically to promote cognizance and remembrance of the Christian past, kept vividly alive through participation in its many rituals (Nelson 2003; James 2005; Harvey 2006). The synaesthetic character of these rituals, however, and the convolution of oral and textual tendencies in Byzantine society suggest that frequently these lines of distinction may have been blurred. This is an important point, for it serves as a reminder of the temptation to apply our modern sensibilities to analyses of cultures very unlike our own. In any case, if we are to listen to the Byzantines themselves we understand many, if not most of their actions, whether inscribed or embedded, to have been geared toward the practical goal of attaining salvation. The question of how this could be done is therefore crucial.

Envisioning Memory

The Church played a vital role in providing mechanisms to remain vigilant in the fight against oblivion. Essential to this was the notion of a "lazy soul," that is, the soul of an individual who strayed from the standard tenets of Orthodoxy by reinterpreting it or who did not keep the concept of salvation alive and at the forefront of his or her thoughts and actions. The consequences of possessing a lazy soul were clearly described in the ninth century by Nikephoros, the Patriarch of Constantinople, during a lengthy exchange with the Iconoclast emperor Leo V (813–20). According to the patriarch, Leo's intellectualism, his failure to remember and vouchsafe the strictures of Orthodox practice (in this case the acceptance of images), would lead him to "lose his grasp upon the notion of God and wander through the Plain of Oblivion like a reptile creeping around earthly bodies" (Fischer 1998: 87). The visual image of a miserable, bleak afterlife where one is completely forgotten is a compelling and effective one that must have targeted "loose" believers, especially those who questioned or neglected Orthodox practice or who cared deeply about their post-mortem legacy. According to such a scenario, *lethe*—being forgotten by everyone—was hell.

It was of course the Church and its liturgy that countered this potential fate, as is most clearly and simply stated during the Great Entrance when the Eucharist is ritually ushered into the sanctuary. At this pivotal moment, participants not only commemorate Christ's sacrifice for mankind; they also petition God, in the words of the penitent thief, "Lord, remember me (*mnestheti mou, Kyrie* …) in Thy kingdom." This was the central motivating factor for every Byzantine, whether emperor or peasant, that they be remembered by God himself for eternity, and it goes far to explain why it was so important to leave others behind to remember and pray for salvation. Without this, the patriarch's harrowing "Plain of Oblivion" was unavoidable.

Other accounts featured similar tales of the afterlife designed to keep the meditational focus on salvation. Much later, in the fourteenth century, a homily given by the Archbishop of Thessalonike featured a startling image of the Last Judgment, in which souls, in the form of human beings, appeared entirely naked before the Lord,

their sins inscribed like tattoos over their bodies. The archbishop emphasized the role of memory and its salvific powers in his instructions to the congregation: "You, too, dearly beloved, engrave this memory in your heart as if on a tablet and consider often what you must remember about it … At that time "we shall all stand naked" on that universal and novel stage, bearing a written record of our deeds, be they bad or good … these will be manifest to all, inscribed on our body as if on paper" (Hero 1993: 140).

To fight a lazy soul, therefore, required weapons, and one of the most effective was found in the form of images for contemplation, no matter whether they were created mentally, through words, or through actual physical representations. Indeed, pictures were highly recommended as a means to fight memory loss and gain salvation in another ninth-century *Life*, in this case that of the Patriarch Tarasios. His biographer went to great lengths to explain and describe the sorts of visual images recommended by the patriarch, both in his sermons and in the extensive painted cycles that he commissioned for churches in the capital. The latter featured graphic, often gruesome scenes of martyrdom that were intended to jolt the senses into remembering the pious acts depicted and, through contemplation, to keep the mind firmly focused on the goal of salvation (Brubaker 1989: 19). The author of the *Life* put it best: "Who does not revere a colorful painting that offers examples of piety? … Who has not acquired a long-lasting memory, conducive to salvation, from frequently observing them?" (Tarasios: Efthymiades 1998: 194–7). Likewise, painted images of the Last Judgment, common from the eleventh century but known to have existed earlier, provided numerous and easily accessible opportunities for viewers to engage in direct reflection on the afterlife and their own place within the salvation story of the Church. Images were clearly understood as a supremely effective means to prod the memory. Those who commissioned them, often high-ranking church officials possessing the necessary resources for their realization, were well aware of their mnemonic potential (for more on this theme, see Dimitropoulou in this volume).

This is nowhere more apparent than in the famous mosaic image of the Virgin and Child which adorns the central apse of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Figure 9.1). It is surely one of the most significant memory images to survive from Byzantium, due in large measure to the existence of a sermon composed by the Patriarch Photios for its inauguration in 867 and to celebrate the demise of Iconoclasm. Picture and speech are in fact co-dependent: ever since the correlation of the two by Cyril Mango in the 1950s, one cannot contemplate one without considering the other (Mango 1986: 187–90). The image is simple and monumental: against a plain gold background, the stately Virgin sits on a jeweled, cushioned throne with the Christ Child seated in her lap. Much has been written about it, with art historians raising fascinating issues of its contemporary reception, inherent visuality, and optical effect, and its reflection (or not) of Photios's florid description (Brubaker 1989; Nelson 2000; James 2005). The image also fits squarely into discussions of memory, for the patriarch's description contains an important theoretical digression wherein he emphasizes the visual over the aural, crediting images with the supreme ability to generate memory. This was very much an intellectual aside, one which relied on, or at least agreed with, the theories of Orthodox predecessors such as the

Figure 9.1. Church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. Apse Mosaic.

aforementioned patriarchs Nikephoros and Tarasios in the early ninth century (Brubaker 1989). All, including Photios, advanced anti-Iconoclastic arguments in an effort to underline the importance of images as a more active and immediate way of remembering and therefore engaging members of the faith. As part of this, Photios described the process of memory and the role of vision within its experience (Nelson 2000).

It is worth repeating this famous section of the sermon for its remarkable and almost "scientific" consideration of the issue. In this passage Photios was speaking about the deeds of the saints and their representation: "These things are conveyed both by stories and by pictures, but it is the spectators rather than the hearers who are drawn to emulation … For surely, having somehow through the outpouring and effluence of the optical rays touched and encompassed the object, it too sends the essence of the thing seen on to the mind, letting it be conveyed from there to the memory for the concentration of unfailing knowledge. Has the mind seen? Has it grasped? Has it visualized? Then it has effortlessly transmitted the forms to the memory" (Mango 1986: 189–90). Photios likely relied on ancient pagan predecessors as well as near-contemporaries in his formulation, and we should probably understand them to have played a role in his general understanding of the experiential process of memory (Lemerle 1986: 233; James 2003). We should not forget that Photios was a scholar and a humanist, and in this context the Hagia Sophia mosaic functioned

on a cerebral level as a memory image, simply because the patriarch was explicit in making it one.

At another level of reception, one which certainly reached the non-elite viewer, the Virgin and Child mosaic at Hagia Sophia operated as a memory image because of its power to project the message of salvation (James 2005: 54). It was in fact a *par excellence* example of this: on the one hand Christ saved through his Incarnation, made possible through the Virgin birth, as suggested in shorthand through the iconography of the image. In this sense it spoke (and speaks) to all beholders over time. On the other hand, its creation and placement in this particular place and time worked as a bold and prominent reminder of the violence of the recent past, specifically the "dark years" of Iconoclasm, during which images were destroyed and Iconophiles (supporters of icons) were persecuted. As Photios proclaimed, this was a celebratory image of victory, of the salvation of the Byzantine Empire as an Orthodox (Iconophile) entity. As such it appealed to the collective memory of those who had experienced the long struggle. But Photios's sermon invested the image with even greater interpretive power, for the Virgin had become, for him, so lifelike that she seemed to speak and even move within the conch. In fact, although clearly seated in the mosaic, according to Photios "the image of the Mother rises up from the very depths of oblivion" (Mango 1986: 187–9). This was surely a philosophical statement of the commemorative power of imagery: not only had an entire network of belief been resurrected, but memory images had been returned to the contemporary landscape of Orthodox belief as a constant reminder of the past (Iconoclasm), the present (the Triumph of Orthodoxy), and future events (individual salvation) for all beholders.

Communicating Memory

The visual sources are clearly important, but how do we address the issue of non-élite perceptions? Is it fair to assume that extraordinary images and thinkers such as Photios were part of everyday experience? Can we take the famous dictum of learned intellectuals, that the typical illiterate individual learned and remembered best through pictures, to be a reflection of reality in all cases? Here I must acknowledge the difficulty of getting beneath the surface of recorded histories left by the upper echelon of Byzantine society, for these are often our only means of access to what we might consider the contemporary mindset. Indeed, in order to get at the "non-élite" concept of memory it is useful to turn to incidental and anecdotal evidence, often left behind by those very élites I am trying to avoid. This is as valuable as the official tenets of the ecclesiastical authorities discussed above.

There are hints given at all levels that the average Byzantine also relied on oral processes and activities, on speaking and hearing, as an essential means to perpetuate memory. Along with image-making, the Byzantines were heavily invested in oral and written communication and the dialogic interaction they fostered as powerful tools for keeping oblivion at bay. This was true not only for practices of inscribing and writing but also, and especially, for vocalizing the memories of individuals, deeds, or occasions. Often the two were intertwined, with texts acting as cues for oral enuncia-

tion. One remembered one's ancient "heritage"—of a great and heroic past, for example, or of the Christian faith—by means of oral "performances" that were derived from texts such as hymns, liturgical rites, acclamations, and so forth. The Church and its liturgy are of course the supreme example of this interdependence. Although originally extemporaneous, the prayers and services that revealed the meaning of the Eucharist were constituted as texts as early as the fourth century, and remained the central feature of the liturgy from this point on (Bouley 1981). In order to be meaningful, however, their oral annunciation was essential. This holds true for the entire Byzantine Orthodox service, each rite having long been codified in liturgical books but each still requiring and receiving vocal administration in order to be effective. One of the most evocative examples of the memorial function of such rituals is found in liturgical diptychs, the lists of names of the living and the dead that were written on tablets and submitted, in advance, to the deacons of the church for proclamation during the Eucharistic service. Simply knowing the existence of the written word in this highly-charged, performative context was never enough; the texts had to be activated—to be spoken and heard, within a memory environment that featured collective experience as the central element of its commission (Papalexandrou 2001).

In a more secular context, the historian Niketas Choniates relayed many instances of the interconnectedness of speech and text in his twelfth-century *History*, where the world of the Komnenian dynasty was portrayed as a lively arena for his cast of colorful and very vocal characters. The individuals in his accounts, regardless of status or education, betray tendencies to rely on rote memorization in their daily experiences. They were frequently depicted utilizing textual prototypes and breathing new life into them as ritualized oral utterances. An interesting example is found in the council of worthies assembled by Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–5) as a means to depose the aged man's youthful predecessor, Alexios II (1180–83) in order to acquire the throne solely for himself. This was enacted to the accompaniment of verses, culled from ancient proverbs and the Homeric epic, and employed as chants or acclamations (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* Magoulias: 151). The historian's version of the assembled body's pithy verses, "Better the aged eagle than the fledgling lark!" (Zenobius 2.38) and "No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king!"(*Iliad* 2.204), attest to the habit of preserving and transmitting ancient texts and to the tendency to memorize and even perform them to dramatic effect.

The same was true for popular poetry and song, and here Choniates offers a range of examples that testify to the common impulse of commemorating contemporary events through these oral media. Andronikos Komnenos famously sang his autobiography in the form of improvized laments, in one case in captivity and accompanied by female mourners who echoed his passionate strains with antiphonal responses. The historian tells us that Andronikos was utterly trapped by his captors, whereupon "he enacted a tragedy. Deftly modulating the plaintive tones of his voice, he sang a pathetic lament that paraded the forcible confinements of the past, and like a dexterous musician plucking the strings of a melodious instrument, he recounted in poetic strains … how pitiable was the present calamity which had overwhelmed him" (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* Magoulias: 192–3). It is a fascinating instance wherein the deposed emperor, in a last-ditch attempt to attain freedom and avoid execution (it

failed), used precisely the same commemorative strategies employed by women to mourn the dead at the tomb (Papalexandrou 2006). The emperor effectively appropriated a venerable tradition of gendered memory work, the roots of which lay in the ancient past but clearly continued, unaltered, throughout the Byzantine centuries and beyond (Alexiou 2002). The image of the event points to the perceived emotional power and efficaciousness of vernacular techniques, in this case lament, for commemoration through oral performance at all levels of society.

Choniates also informed us of iambic verses that were "contained in books and recited by many," in some cases acting as testimony to the ignominious deeds of miscreant emperors such as Andronikos. The historian in fact gives a sampling of such metrical lines which he embedded in his text (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* Magoulias: 196–7). Songs in verse survive from as early as the twelfth century, though they surely existed earlier (Beaton 1980: 75–8). Despite the meagreness of surviving evidence, the existence of folk song and their power to preserve memory in Byzantium, as in all cultures, would have been considerable. Indeed, the epic story of Digenes Akritas, the biracial hero of the eastern borderland, provides the finest example wherein a folk hero was commemorated first through oral poetry and only later through its conversion to the written word (Jeffreys 1998). These oral impulses were certainly passed down from one generation to the next, allowing for the preservation of the past by encouraging a vocal "dialog" that was not only a form of entertainment but also a serious repository of cultural memory.

This devotion to "vocality" (Geary 2002), or oral transmission, as a key concept in the preservation of memory is frequently encountered in the writings of the Byzantines. A revealing example is found in the tenth-century *Life* of St Luke of Stiris, where the necessity of speaking out as a means to fight oblivion and envy (another of the great enemies) is clearly conveyed. An account of a man healed of dropsy began with a brief explanation as to why such miracle stories should be remembered: "If someone chose to keep silent and not entrust to writing the miracle concerning the cleric Nikolaos … would he not appear to do a great injustice and to deprive through his envy an audience eager for a fine story?" (Luke of Stiris: Connor and Connor 1998: 136–7). Here we encounter a typical conflation of writing and speech. This was standard fare, for saints' *Lives* were not intended to be experienced in isolation but rather read aloud or performed before small groups of listeners in various social contexts (Efthymiadis 1996: 66–7). They were intended not so much to provide the hearer with new information, as we would approach them today, but rather to commit important stories to memory for their continued transmission (Geary 2002: 115).

But the author of Nikolaos's miracle story also conveyed the importance of sharing and spreading the word, and the notion that keeping something to oneself (a form of jealousy) or remaining quiet about a great event was a form of "envy" that was almost sinful in nature. It was one's duty to be vocal in perpetuating memory. An inscription dated to the year 873–4 at the church of the Virgin "of Skripou," in central Greece, reinforces this concept with a similar message concerning that building's high-ranking patron. In it the poet declared: "Neither envy nor eternal time" could obscure his memory "in the vast depths of oblivion," because the church "roars

out" the message of his fame and good deeds. I have interpreted this to mean that the inscribed texts embedded in the walls were the enabling medium for the patron's commemoration (Papalexandrou 2001), but of course the very existence of the monument itself fulfilled the same purpose. A slightly later text of the tenth century, written by the archbishop Arethas as an epitaph for his late sister, Anna, provides a rich and moving example of the intertwining of oral and written commemoration. After expounding the dead woman's virtues, the archbishop concludes: "For the mouths of all can by no means forget her/ who have so good an admonition by her life./ But if they do, this inscription placed/ beside her tomb shall speak more than all" (*Greek Anthology* 15, 33). In other words, the perpetuation of Anna's memory was accomplished through verbal recollection, and through lament, as common strategies for graveside remembrance (Alexiou 2002). If these should cease, however, the text would act first as prompt and then as provision for the continuous performance of her biography over time. The surviving inscriptions at Skripou functioned in precisely the same way, acting as cues for both prayer and panegyric in perpetual commemoration of the deceased founder.

Where there were no texts, we can only assume that speech and sound were paramount in memorial contexts. Such a statement of course brings with it the problem of "irretrievability" of the oral nature of past cultures (Camille 1985: 36), and at present I can only suggest the existence of certain practices, techniques and formulae culled from written works as possible proofs. Oaths presumably held as much sway, if not more, in their public pronouncement as in their recorded form as a means to record and verify transactions, while curses and blessings remained important as commemorative verbal guarantees of security and protection at all periods and all levels of Byzantine society (Saradi 1994). Proverbs, important for encapsulating folk wisdom, were integrated into everyday speech, not to mention learned texts, in the form of stylistic embellishment. Interest in the practice of magic appears to have been a standard and constant feature of popular culture, and with it came the oral pronouncement of spells and exorcisms as an essential ingredient for their success (Greenfield 1988: 142–5). Formulaic repetitions were probably more important than we have realized: their place within poetry and song, the liturgy, imperial ceremony, even visual media, should be understood as a mnemonic device intended to punctuate and perpetuate an important moment, personality or concept, sometimes for the sake of learning by rote. This is the case in all cultures with a significant oral component, and Byzantium was no exception. Repetition was part of the fight against silence, and silence was often synonymous with oblivion. Future students of sound and aurality in Byzantium will doubtless find many more examples from the realm of daily life. In the meantime, I have relied mainly on textual evidence to think about a world in which, according to saints' *Lives*, miracle stories were to be "sung by the tongues of all and heralded up to today" (Nikon: Sullivan 1987: 227) and where monastic documents warned that memory could be lost "in the same way that great deeds which do not have speeches to praise them fall into oblivion" (Morris 1995: 291). In all cases one senses a mandate to participate in these oral strategies of commemoration which were a necessary, and perhaps cherished, commonplace in Byzantine society.

Bodily Reminders

As a coda to this section, I add a brief note concerning "inscribed memory" and the deliberate act of writing on the body. We have already seen this in the vividly imagined, fourteenth-century Judgment-Day scene where naked bodies were inscribed with good and bad deeds as a kind of human ledger of memory. Other examples, presented to us by the Byzantines as historical events (though they probably were not), portrayed tattooing as a meaningful and highly effective commemorative act, one that could often be imbued with negative sentiment and punitive purpose. The most famous case of tattooing dates to the early ninth century when the two brothers Theodore and Theophanes, known as the "Graptoi," or "written ones," were punished by the emperor Theophilos for their Iconophile beliefs. The two men were known for their outstanding poetic skill, and so it was deemed appropriate that they be branded with twelve lines of mediocre iambic verse, prominently inscribed upon their foreheads for all to see (Michael Synkellos: Cunningham 1991:84–6, 160–61; Barber 1997). In the poem, the two were commemorated as "worthless vessels of superstitious error," doing "many terrible, shameful things with impious thoughts." It is interesting that their textual content has been carefully recorded in Iconophile literature, despite its invective. When we consider the edifying context of hagiography and the embedding of the narrative within no fewer than six saint's *Lives*, the propagandist purpose of its inclusion becomes clear (Lauxtermann 2003). The meaning has been turned upside down: the tattoos in fact proclaimed the virtue of the saints whose bodies, and reputations, they pretended to tarnish, while defiling the memory of a pernicious emperor, an Iconoclast, whose heretical doctrine and flawed art were documented for posterity.

Another ninth-century event similarly pointed up the effectiveness and durability that writing, or, in this case, marks on the body, were believed to engender for the purposes of memory. In 866, the future emperor Basil I, just before being crowned co-ruler by Michael III, was required to undergo a ritual intended as a perpetual reminder of the senior emperor's intense feeling for his new co-ruler. According to the historian Genesios, Michael "commanded two servants to undress Basil and to stretch his arms … And Basil, who was youthful, was whipped by the emperor with thirty cuts of the double whip in order to have a written memory of the emperor's tender love for him" (Schminck 2000: 63). As with the Graptoi, we see the body as a canvas, not only for the display of power but also, and especially, as a permanent repository of commemorative emblems that evoked all manner of conditions for the bearer, whether of past vulnerability and shame, a rite of passage, or the possibility of future deliverance and triumph.

There is something poignant about signs on the body, and I would like to close this section by emphasizing the strong emotive component that underlies the act of tattooing. We can, I think, easily relate to this today: despite its commonness, a tattoo remains something extremely personal even when prominently visible, and gazing at one is a penetrating experience for inscribed individual and beholder alike. As images that decorate or defile the human body, they sometimes surprise and shock, reactions

that help to embed them in our memories. The same must have been true in Byzantium. Indeed, I suggest that this form of commemoration was one of the most effective in that it conflated the two forms of "inscribed" and "embedded" memory discussed here: the tattooed individual bore and perpetuated an inscribed message, sometimes publicly, as with the Graptoi, and communally. So too the stigmata of Christ, as memorial marks revealed to believers, functioned as proof of past events that surprised and convinced viewers. On the other hand the message was also personal and ingrained, a constant reminder internalized by the individual and constantly remembered either through the bearer's own touch or through the directed gaze of a beholder. A demarcation on the body would have been a reminder of personal history and a constant, inescapable companion in the journey through the dense web of ritualized, "embedded" activities that comprised daily life in the Middle Ages.

Practical Tools of Memory and the Fight against Time

The Byzantines maintained a vast array of cognitive tools, both material and psychological, that were intended and developed specifically to promote and safeguard memory. Of the former, a number of man-made commodities ostensibly designed to ensure the safety of property were often given specific commemorative functions, mainly through the addition of writing or imagery. An individual's name, for example, or an engraved supplication automatically enhanced the function of a seal or signet ring (for stamping) from one of pure utility into an item of lasting personal identification (Vikan and Nesbitt 1980). Such an object, together with its mass-produced imprint, not only guaranteed rights of ownership or validated transactions and testimonies but also stood as conspicuous, if tiny, monuments to an individual's existence and often to his or her pious good works (Figure 9.2). Since it was disseminated and therefore visible to many, its memorial power must have been deemed especially efficacious. The same may be said of monograms, the convoluted, puzzle-like emblems that were a ubiquitous feature of so many buildings and objects throughout the Byzantine centuries (Figure 9.3). Their decoding, presumably by a capable reader, served to initiate acts of remembrance through which the presence, identity, and high status of a given individual were unveiled. No matter whether scratched on small objects or sculpted on buildings, such memory tools went beyond the practical in order to satisfy the intrinsic memorial requirements typical of the time.

The intellectual environments of Byzantium, especially those of the educated elite and the monastic scriptorium, utilized an abundance of tools to aid in memorization. This was an important activity at a time when books were relatively scarce, and here again we must imagine a world very unlike ours where literacy is standard and information easily retrieved without recourse to our own powers of memory. The Byzantines, by contrast, relied heavily on rote learning for verbatim recall, and if we are to believe the sources, their facility in this pursuit was considerable. A twelfth-century priest allegedly memorized all the works of Theodore Prodromos, a popular court poet of his day, and recited them by heart to the intellectual Michael Italikos (Mullett 1984: 199). Some modern scholars believe that the patriarch Photios composed his

Figure 9.2. Bronze signet ring, inscribed "Lord, help your servant Stephen, Amen."

Image not available in the electronic edition

Figure 9.3. Ephesos, Church of St John. Impost capitals with monogram of Theodora.

vast *Bibliotheca*, a collection of some 386 ancient texts which he compiled and reviewed, from memory (Wilson 1996: 95–6); Others have scanned occurrences of the myriad quotations from biblical and classical texts, often reused in the "high" literature of the period, and determined that they were almost certainly memorized rather than culled from handbooks (Littlewood 1999: 35).

In the monastery, scribes were admonished not to read the texts they were copying, and rote memorization was generally the preferred method for learning and contemplation (Ivanova-Sullivan 2005: 51–2). In such environments the use of tools such as acrostics, poems or writings in which the first letter or word of each line spells out another message, were often appended to texts, especially hymns and the liturgy, and should be regarded as typical mnemonic aids. It is worth emphasizing, however, that we lack a systematic treatment of the memorial arts for Byzantium, and that many of the tools and techniques so skillfully identified for the medieval West (Carruthers 1996) have yet to be fully wrested from the Byzantine sources. The many instances of memorization in non-elite contexts are equally interesting and plentiful, and they deserve to be recovered from a wealth of untapped sources, including hagiography, histories, inscriptions, foundation charters, notarial acts, and so on.

In addition to memorization, other tools employed to combat oblivion may have specifically targeted Time, or *chronos*, the last of the three great enemies. Although it has not occupied a central place in this discussion, time and its destructive powers were immensely important to the Byzantines. The long shadow of *Chronos*, personified as an old man, loomed over many projects and was continuously evoked as justification for renewal. The concept had its basis in a pessimistic view of society and culture, supposedly exemplified by its decaying values and crumbling monuments (Hunger 1986: 514). One of the most effective weapons administered by the Byzantines against the passage of time was the collecting and ordering of information. This was nothing short of making order out of chaos, of classifying and arranging the past so as to record it properly and therefore remember it better. It should probably be inferred for all levels of Byzantine society, but as usual it is most clearly seen in the intellectual realm, where its application was epic in scope during the ninth and tenth centuries. Termed "encyclopedism" in modern scholarship, it was a process of acquiring and enshrining arcane information, of compiling texts of every sort into newly organized books and archives (Lemerle 1986: 309–46). Examples of this movement are numerous: some of the most well known are the *Bibliotheca* of Photios, as redactions of the ancient authors he had read, and the enormous collection of epigrams by Konstantine Kephalas, later to become the *Palatine Anthology* (*Greek Anthology*: Paton 1925–6). In the tenth century, the movement gained more ground under the emperors Leo VI and Constantine VII (886–912; 913–59): They sponsored collections of books and commissioned compilations of imperial ceremonies and administration, war treatises and strategy, agricultural information, hagiography, and Roman law, to name just a few. At the same time the flourishing of new collections of theological as well as secular literary excerpts, as *florilegia* and *menologia* (in the case of the former) and *gnomoi* (in the latter) further attest the currency of such activities as a means to divert the dangerous trajectory of time.

This spate of activity presupposes the connection of memory to books and literacy, and for some individuals this indeed must have been the case. But the interest in admiring and collecting the past, and reordering it according to new (Christian) principles, extended well beyond the intellectual realm of the page. It appeared, for example, in the walls of many Byzantine churches, where the physical remains of ancient sites, as excerpted fragments, were gathered and incorporated as *spolia* within newly created building facades. While often this placement was undertaken for reasons of practicality, on occasion we can trace purposeful and perhaps meaningful arrangements that suggest the desire to emphasize these fragments of the past, whether for purely aesthetic or more purposeful, commemorative reasons (Papalexandrou 2003). As visual, rather than textual statements, they may have been accessible to a broader swath of the population for whom the exact meaning was less important than the overall force of their collective, we might even say "encyclopedic," impression, of an ancient past reordered and pressed into service of a triumphant, Christian present. It is worth mentioning that the funerary pedigree of these monuments, not only as churches but often as the burial place of founders, located them squarely within a context where the recollection of past events was the standard, shared activity of all those who beheld and visited them.

To step into the interior of the church, however, was to enter into the most persuasive memory environment the Orthodox Church had at its disposal. It was the container *par excellence* of textual recollection, sensory stimuli, and memory images, the supreme paradigm of the purposely ordered, hierarchical space whose "encyclopedic" arrangement of scenes could be easily located and "used" by the beholder to cue reflection and commemoration, whether personal or communal, of themes and concepts that had survived for centuries. For the Byzantines, this environment, along with the maintenance of Christian tenets and practices, were essential in the great human struggle to uphold memory and defeat its three great enemies of time, envy, and forgetfulness. Their looming threat was neatly expressed in the *Life* of the patriarch Tarasios, whose death and burial in 806 were properly commemorated in the church he founded in his monastery on the Bosphorus. According to the biographer, even the combined forces of oblivion were no match for a fine soul such as Tarasios: "Over him the long lapse of time will not cast a veil, for he stands above all Time. For by its nature, virtue is impervious to oblivion, nor is it blunted by the wasting effects of envy. Indeed, virtue makes its own remembrance immortal in our souls and does not allow it to fade away and be covered by silence" (Tarasios: Efthymiades 1998: 203). In the mind of the writer, virtue and memory were tightly intertwined in mankind's valiant human struggle to thwart oblivion.

FURTHER READING

To date we are left with more questions than answers concerning issues of memory in Byzantium. Much future work remains in order to uncover the full range of "inscribed" as well as "embedded" practices of memory, and it is mainly westward to Europe and backward to late antiquity that we are likely to find guidance. For the medieval West, Mary Carruthers's two

books (1990, 1998) provide an exemplary model for understanding memory systems and processes in medieval culture, while Jacques Le Goff (1996) offers a broad and reflective overview of memory over time, with a commitment to comparative analyses between cultures, a tool that could prove equally fruitful for Byzantinists. James Fentress and Chris Wickham have meanwhile given us a useful glimpse into group or collective strategies (1988). All rely on Frances Yates's seminal work (1966), which has not fully receded into the shadows. Scholars of the late antique world have been actively pursuing the topic with intriguing results: recent studies have delved into specific themes such as pilgrimage and memory (Frank 2000) or inscription and erasure (Hedrick 2000). The reader should remember, however, that the hard work of collecting and analyzing the data, systematically, and with regard to modern theoretical concerns, remains for future students to undertake. Ideally this will be accompanied by additional studies devoted to Byzantine literacy. In the meantime, basic background reading of Ong 1982; Connerton 1989; Nora 1989; Bloch 1989; Halbwachs 1992 and others will provide ample means to discover pre-modern mentalities and encounter alternative ways of seeing, hearing, imagining, and remembering.

CHAPTER TEN

Emotions in Byzantium

Martin Hinterberger

Joy, sorrow, fear, envy, anger, and similar features of human life are all what we term as emotions. Interest in the study of the emotions has intensified continuously over the last decades. Psychology, philosophy, and medicine seek to address the question of what exactly the emotions are; sociology and the economic sciences are concerned with the meaning of the emotions in the context of human actions and interactions; and last, but not least, the cultural-historical disciplines increasingly realize the significance of the emotions for the study of past cultures (Oatley and Jenkins 1996; Griffiths 1997; Solomon 2003 and 2004; Manstead et al. 2004; Turner and Stets 2005). Although these different disciplines offer various and contrasting views about the nature of the emotions, they all agree that emotions are composed in a complex manner: they consist of thoughts and judgments about the world (a cognitive component) and also have a neurophysiologic side (processes in the brain and the remaining body); they are experienced and expressed internally and they initiate actions (Merten 2003: esp. 9–34; Berry et al. 2002: esp. 185–8). While colloquially the word "emotion" is often identified with *feeling*, this represents only one aspect of the complex entity, namely internal experience. For the present study, it is of particular importance to note that emotions are not a human constant, but that they differ depending upon culture and epoch. Substantial deviations can therefore be determined by both a synchronous and a diachronous comparison (Stearns 2000 with further bibliography). Additionally, the variability of emotions particularly affects their culturally determined expression, referred to as *display rules*, and to a lesser degree their culturally shaped experience, *feeling rules* (Merten 2003: 125–36; Oatley and Jenkins 1996: 52–60). This means that we need to appreciate that both the Byzantine perception of emotions and the emotions themselves differ from the current concepts of emotions and the experiences thereof.

Byzantinists have paid little attention to the study of the emotions. This is particularly surprising, considering that numerous Byzantine texts are rich in emotional episodes (that is to say narrative units that describe emotions) and that Byzantine

historians acknowledge emotions as constitutive factors in human action (Kazhdan 1980: 297–8; Ljubarskij 1992: 183; Hinterberger 2003: 162–6). Above all, historiographical texts, the subject of research in many other contexts, often talk about emotions. The very fact that emotions appear so frequently in Byzantine texts, especially when compared to modern historiographical writings, as well as the obvious part they play in the sequence of actions, immediately provides evidence for changes in the meaning of emotions that occurred from the Byzantine period up to modern times, changes that separate Byzantine culture from the Western modern world. Further, certain Byzantine emotions, such as *katanuxis* and *akêdia*, do not have modern equivalents, and others, like *phthonos* or *mnêsikakia*, played a bigger role in Byzantine society than their modern counterparts, envy and resentment, appear to do now. (*Akêdia* translates as "flagging" and "lethargy in the quest for God, accompanied by despair:" Roberts 2003: 245–7; Sorabji 2000: 368–9; Talbot 1991; Harré and Finlay-Jones 1986; Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971: 84–90. *Katanuxis* is discussed in more detail below). These cases of cultural emphasis on certain emotions are known as hypercognized emotions (Oatley and Jenkins 1996: 44). On the other hand, some characteristic emotions of modern life (stress and guilt, for example) are completely absent in Byzantium, while others, such as romantic love, romantic jealousy, and disgust, play only minor roles.

This underlines that a hermeneutic danger lies in ignoring the historical dimensions and changeability of the emotions of past cultures and applying our own expectations and experiences to the studied subject matter instead: for example, in speculating upon the type of emotions a Byzantine person might have experienced in a given situation. A strict definition of the emotions is needed, together with a study of typical emotional episodes, in which the nature of specific emotions is clearly evident; we also need to avoid associating the presence or, more frequently, the absence of specific emotions with certain value judgements. It is important to be aware that one's own emotional world is just as historically conditioned as the Byzantine one (and that of every other culture, present or past), and has no general validity. Consequently, the objective of the analysis of emotions in Byzantium is not the identification of timeless truths, but the capture of the historical dimension of emotions on the one hand and their social functions at a given time on the other hand.

The fact that emotions have not received great attention as a theme of Byzantine historiography, and that their investigation in Byzantine studies remains underdeveloped, has much to do with culturally conditioned partiality, that is to say with deep-rooted prejudices against the so-called "irrational impulses" of humans and against the "soft" facts, considered irrelevant for understanding and describing the course of history. In particular, historians tend to pay special attention to "rational" decisions and to "hard" facts, and therefore focus on the history of events, institutions, diplomacy, warfare, and the like. The fact that emotions have traditionally been ascribed to "the feminine sphere" has further limited their research (Böhme 1997: 532; Kasten et al. 2002b: 9). Philology too is concerned with emotions only when they form the specific topic of texts or groups of texts, as, for instance, with love as a constituent of the romantic novel (Cupane 1992; Smith 1999: 183–94).

Art and literature do provide some access to the world of Byzantine emotions. In the case of art, the display of emotions is limited to those that can be clearly expressed in pictorial terms, through gesture, facial expression or other visible physical symptoms (Maguire 1977 on sorrow). In this context, we need to be particularly aware of not making immediate parallels with our own experiences but rather considering what we know of Byzantine emotions. Textual sources make it very clear that Byzantine emotions are not always connected with the physical symptoms characteristic of their current equivalents: blushing, for example, usually accompanied shame or embarrassment, but could also express joy (Mark the Deacon, *V. Porph.* 42, 14–16). Tears may be a sign of mourning or contrition, but also one of anger (Hinterberger 2006: 42–3). Here, however, I will concern myself exclusively with information extracted from texts.

Statements about emotions can be found in a great variety of texts. Historical research on emotions concentrates on the investigation of "ego-documents," any kind of self-statement, but in particular autobiographies, diaries, and letters. These writings are differentiated from those that are concerned with the representation and specifically the propaganda of correct and incorrect behavioral standards, such as behavioral guidelines or sermons; indeed, any type of literature (including fiction) can basically convey such norms. The first category of texts allows conclusions about the emotions experienced by individuals to be drawn, while the latter are restricted to emotional conventions (emotionology: Stearns and Stearns 1985; Stearns 2000). A clear separation, however, is not really possible, for even autobiographies follow literary conventions, especially in Byzantium. Further, the separation of the personal and private sphere, if it even existed in Byzantium, followed different rules than today: for example, over the appropriate conscious public display of emotions. Byzantine autobiographical texts are very rare and only contain information about some emotions of the author. These are, in general, the socially accepted emotions, such as mourning for the deceased, love for children or joy over an experience of God (Hinterberger 1999 on autobiographical texts, esp. 77 on the "note-book" of a civil servant mourning for a dead child, and 277 on the love of a mother for her child). Symeon the New Theologian describes his longing for God vividly, with a wide range of emotive vocabulary (*epithumia, erôs, ponos endotatos, theîos pothos*—the love of God, *chara, hêdonê*—joy—over the experience of divine light. Symeon the New Theologian, *Katech.* 16, 13. 24–8. 78–82). Sermons, catechisms and morally didactic literature all have a distinct normative character that also applies to various florilegia, whose chapters are dedicated in large parts to emotions. In the ninth- to tenth-century *Loci Communes* of Pseudo-Maximos the Confessor, for example, the following passions are dealt with: anger; greed; children's respect for their parents and the parents' love for their children; fear; gluttony; mourning and dejection; vanity; envy; resentment; and self-love (For emotions in the eleventh-century "Patmos florilegium," Sargologos 1990: 35–48).

These texts make largely theoretical statements about emotions. More descriptive statements, particularly emotional episodes, succession of events, that are typical for certain emotions or that constitute emotions are found mainly in historiographical and hagiographical texts. In the following, I will present Byzantine theories and

general opinions concerning emotions, some of which I will examine more closely. Disregarding the general normative character of all statements, it has constantly to be remembered that we are not dealing with actual experiences, but with the representation of emotions in texts (Benthien et al. 2000: 10).

In Byzantium, the theoretical engagement with emotions takes place primarily in context of theology. Human existence was always seen in relationship to God (see Cunningham in this volume). In this respect, emotions were understood mostly as a problem for the relationship between humans and God and, at times, as a prerequisite for the functioning of this relationship. The theoretical picture of emotions was shaped in particular by the church fathers of the fourth century, including Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzos, and by the theoreticians of monasticism, Evagrios Pontikos and John Klimakos among others, and expanded by the later theologians Maximos the Confessor and John of Damascus (Knuuttila 2004: esp.127–44). Basil and Gregory wrote comprehensive treatises on certain passions, in which they also considered the physiological symptoms and social component (Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.* 10, 2–3, 356C–360D: appearance and behavior of the angry; *Hom.* 11, 5, 380D–385B: appearance and behavior of the envious; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.* 1, 2, 25, 94–144: appearance and behavior of the angry; Oberhaus 1989: 78–95). Ephraem the Syrian, also writing in the fourth century, dealt in various treatises with the passions in the context of monastic communal life (Ephraem, *De virt. et vit.*). In the tenth century, Symeon Metaphrastes and Theodoros Daphnopates composed treatises that consisted exclusively of extensive quotations from works of Basil and John Chrysostom (Rudberg 1964; Durand 1993: 61–2), with a focus on the discussion of passions. Among the 24 collections of passages from Basil there are the excerpts with the titles: vice and virtue (1); love of God and your neighbor (3); greed (6); sorrow and dejection (12); patience and forbearance (13); gluttony (16); anger and enmity (17); envy (18); chastity and licentiousness (19); humility and vanity (20). Included among the 47 extracts from Chrysostom are love (1), humility (7), gluttony (12), greed (15), pride and vanity (16), envy (17), hatred and enmity (18), sorrow and dejection (19), anger/wrath (20), patience (22), vice and virtue (26), resentment (29). Other authors viewed passions almost exclusively in terms of their meaning for the relationship between humans and God.

The Byzantine term that is the closest equivalent of emotion is *pathos.* This word essentially means "that which happens to someone (or that which befalls someone);" "happens" and "happening" in the sense of event is meant in the general sense of the word. This is usually a negative event, a misadventure, an accident, an illness. Strictly speaking, *pathos* is also "that which befalls the soul," a passion of the soul. The generally negative connotations of the word also apply here, for it indicates predominantly a suffering or illness of the soul. In comparison with the modern term "emotion," Byzantine passions additionally comprise human impulses that are nowadays defined as driving forces, such as the desire for food or the sex drive (John of Damascus, *Expo. Fid.* 27, 9–20; Maximos Confessor, *Quaest. ad Thalass.*, Introd. 275–92), as well as forms of human behavior such as *gastrimargia* or gluttony, *polulogia*, loquaciousness, and *loidoria*, rudeness.

Passions were seen as typically human characteristics, since God is *apathês*, passionless (John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 1, 22–4 and 70, 3–9; Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971; 100). Angels, on the other hand were, in principle, believed capable of experiencing passions, since pride and envy were considered the causes for the fall of Lucifer, the "bringer of light," and the angels subject to him (Heiser 1976: 238–9). Christ also took on passions with his Incarnation, but only the natural and pure passions (*phusika kai adiablêta pathê*), which is why he felt the fear of death (John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 70 and 64, 22–7).

It was a cause for controversy as to whether the passions belonged to the inherent nature of humanity (Ware 1989). Those authors, who regarded them as a natural human component, such as Abbas Isaias and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, differentiated between the natural and unnatural workings of passions. Such workings that were not directed toward God were opposed to true nature. In this context, passions had, in principle, a positive and negative potential. For instance, if eagerness, *zêlos*, was directed toward the acquisition of virtues, it corresponded to its nature; however, if it turned into jealousy of your neighbor, it became *phthonos*, envy, and thus unnatural. Similarly, anger was naturally directed at the devil; if, however, anger was directed at fellow men, it too became an unnatural impulse (Ware 1989. Also Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.* 10, 5, 365B–C; John Chrysostom, *De inani gloria* 69, 835–48).

Most authors, however, largely excluded the positive side of passions in their deliberations; when speaking of *pathê*, they always implied negative *pathê*. Since God is passionless and since humans are created according to his image, passions could not have been a component of the original human nature. Passions only developed after the violation of God's commandment, and may even have played a substantial role therein. The turning away from God (the love of God) and the turn to oneself (self-love, *philautia*) and the sensuous world (the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) was regarded as the initial passionate act by Maximos the Confessor. From this, all further passions developed. According to Maximos, all passions derived from this self-love, insofar as they represented either the pursuit of desire—the satisfaction of self-love in the form of gluttony, pride, vanity, and the like—or a reaction to its injury in the shape of anger, envy, and hate. (Maximos Confessor, *Quaest. Ad Thalass. Intr.* 209–90).

Early Byzantine Christian authors adopted ideas regarding the categorization and conception of the workings of passion that were common at the time and that can be traced back to the theories of various philosophical schools, above all (Neo-) Platonic and Stoic influences. The soul itself was said to have three components (or forces, *dunameis*): the reasonable; the thymic/spiritual; and the covetous part (*logikon*, *thumikon* and *epithumêtikon*. Basil of Caesarea, *Against anger* 5, 365D–368D; John Chrysostom, *De inani gloria* 65; Evagrios Pontikos, *De cogit.* 17; John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 26). Dorotheos of Gaza localized these three parts of the soul in different regions of the body: the *epithumêtikon* in the liver, the *thumikon* in the heart and the *logikon* in the chest (Dorotheos of Gaza, *Instr.* XVII §176). *Thumikon* and *epithumêtikon* together represent the "passionate" part of the soul (endowed with passion, *pathetikon*) shared by animals. The task of the *logikon* was to guide the two

other parts of the soul or the passions in general and to provide them with direction (Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.* 10, 5, 365A–B; Gregory of Nyssa, *De creat. hom.* 14, 2–4). Some authors assigned different specific emotions to these three parts of the soul (Louth 1984); in the eleventh-century author, Niketas Stethatos, the three basic passions that are assigned to the *logikon*, the *thumos*, and the *epithumia* are pride (*uperêphaneia*), love of money (*philarguria*), and love of lust (*philêdonia*) (*De anim.* 56). John of Damascus, following the fifth-century theologian Nemesios of Edessa, knew of four basic emotions: lust (*hedonê*); pain (*lupê*); fear (*phobos*); and rage (*thumos*). Pain could be further divided into four sub-categories, fear into six, and rage into three (John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 27–30, 80–82; Nemesios, *De nat. hom.* 17–21).

Some authors referred to the necessity of passions for the approximation to God. Maximos the Confessor, for example, regarded the love of God as *makariston pathos*, blessed passion (Maximos Confessor, *De carit.* III 71). Although the differentiation into positive and negative orientations of fundamentally neutral passions is found in the theoretical analyses of the topic of passion, these generally emphasized the struggle with the negative characteristics, so that *pathos* mostly meant bad *pathos* and was considered an illness of the soul, rather than the strife for positive passions, which were perhaps tacitly presupposed.

In this negative sense, passions represented sins and obstacles on the way to God, while *apatheia*, passionlessness, was the condition for the view of God (*theôria*). This view is particularly apparent in the writings of Evagrios Pontikos (Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971: 98–112; Géhin et al. 1998: 11–23; Sorabji 2000: 360–62). Significantly, many of the stages on the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, one of the most influential of all ascetic texts, are passions, or the strife to overcome them (John Klimakos, *Scala*: 8 the absence of wrath; 9 resentment; 13 *akêdia*, listlessness; 16 greed; 20 cowardice; 21 vanity; 22 pride). Passions were seen as initiated by the sensual world. Since the hermit had withdrawn himself from that world, he needed to fight its thoughts and memories, the *logismoi* (Evagrios Pontikos, *Prakt.* 48). In this sense, *logismoi* corresponded to *pathê*, according to Evagrios Pontikos, and other authors followed him (Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971: 55–6; Sorabji 2000: 362–4). These thoughts only initiated passions, but they became sins if they lingered in the soul with its agreement (*Prakt.* 6). The Western doctrine of the seven capital sins developed from the group of eight compiled by Evagrios in this context: *pathê/logismoi* of gluttony, fornication, avarice, distress, anger, listlessness, vainglory, pride (*gastrimargia, porneia, filarguria, lupê, orgê, akêdia, kenodoxia, uperêfania*. Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971: 63–94. Sorabji 2000: 358–9).

Since the (bad) passions were the cause of the fall of Satan and also of man's expulsion from paradise, and moreover since they represented substantial obstacles for humans on their way to God, they were considered tools of Satan and of the demons, and accordingly identified with demons (Bravo Garcia 2000: 203–12). For Evagrios, the words "demon" and "thought" or "passion" were interchangeable, and later Byzantine literature repeatedly referred to passions as demons. Just as passions were obstacles in the natural human effort to reach God during the earthly existence, so too they hampered the ascent of the soul to heaven after death, in the form of tax stations (*telônia*) demanding tolls on the way (Lampakis 1982: 56). Niketas Stethatos

explained that passions did not constitute natural attributes of the soul. If, upon leaving the body after death, the soul still coalesced with passions, Satan would recognize it by these and pull it down into the underworld (*De anima* 15, 68–9).

As one would expect, hagiographical texts are dominated by a predominantly negative consideration of passions. The fight against passions represents a fixed point in biographies of monks. Saints' *Lives* repeatedly describe the struggle of the saint against passions or against humans driven by evil passions. Many of these texts can be understood as guides for the correct handling of passions or as a treatise about certain passions. Thus the central topic of the *Life* of Nikephoros is not his martyrdom, but rather the overcoming of resentment felt against him by a former friend. This story is consequently also equipped with the sub-title *kata mnêsikakias*, "against bearing malice"(Efthymiadis 1991). On his way to God, the monk also had to overcome passions that otherwise possessed a positive character. A frequently discussed problem was the expected withdrawal of the monk from any emotional connection with his family in a society that valued family cohesion highly. The *Life* of Symeon Salos describes, for instance, how Symeon fought against his affection for his mother, and how his companion Ioannes struggled against love for his wife (Leontios of Neapolis, *VSym* esp. 59, 28–60, 15 and 64, 7–18. Also Symeon the New Theologian, *Catech.* 7, esp. 292–431. Hinterberger 1999: 216, n. 190). Contact with relatives was nevertheless allowed in monastic rules, but with the observation of strict regulations (Hinterberger 1999: 221).

The monastic-ascetic ideal shaped the Byzantine world beyond the hermitages and monasteries and is paralleled by a generally negative image of emotions in this broader context. The general validity of ascetic behavioral standards is apparent from imperial acts of contrition (*katanuxis*) exhibited on various public occasions (Hinterberger 2006: 35–8). Nevertheless, certain passions were sometimes depicted in a positive light in historiographical texts, as, for example, when Nikephoros Bryennios reported that the young Alexios Komnenos was torn between the *pathê* of mother love and the desire to fight (Nikephoros Bryennios, *Hist.* I, 12 [105, 6–8]), both of which were undisputed virtues for Bryennios. In this context, to what extent the evaluation of passions might differ between types of texts and genres is another crucial issue that has barely been examined. Independent of the assessment of passions, everyday life in Byzantium (as *not* described in theological-hagiographical texts) was far from the ideal of *apatheia*. Human actions, and thus the course of history, appeared to the Byzantines to be dominated by the passions to a great extent. The representation of emotions in historiography is increasingly apparent from the ninth century onwards. In the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, fear and mourning are prominent (Ljubarskij 1992, 183). The section on the emperor Leo V and Michael II in the tenth-century text of Theophanes Continuatus is defined by the fear and wrath of the protagonist (Theophanes Continuatus I, 22–4. See Hinterberger 2004 for this in the context of Michael Attaleiates, and Kazhdan 1981 for John Kantakuzenos).

I will now move to consider in greater detail a number of emotions that seem of special interest.

Penthos translates as "mourning," particularly mourning for a deceased human being (Müller 2000; Hunt 2004; Hinterberger 2006). The embodiment of *penthos*

was the mourning of a mother for her deceased son. Based on the statement from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5.4), a special mourning cult developed in early Byzantine monasticism (possibly influenced by the Egyptian cult of Isis-Osiris: Müller 2000: 106–11). In this mourning cult, the faithful, and above all the monks, shed tears over their sins and those of mankind. It was said that those tears cleansed the soul, just as baptism washed away the dirt of sin, and thus prepared it for the kingdom of heaven. Because it cleansed and led to God, this form of *penthos* was also called a "joyful sorrow" (*charmolupê*) and created the need for methods that could evoke tears. In particular, thoughts of the divine judgement or mankind's expulsion from paradise and the resulting alienation (*xeniteia*) of man in the world were considered suitable themes to bring about tears (Neophytos, *Pentekont.* 19). Katanyctical texts were composed, among them hymns that inspired the faithful to cry. Nikolaos Kataskepenos, writing in the twelfth century, reported how a monk literally cried himself to death through excessive mourning, supported, among other things, by a collection of stimulating texts (Nikolaos Kataskepenos, *VCyril* 42, 9–11). Since tears of contrition could be shed only by the grace of God, tears were considered the visible sign that God accepted the regret and contrition of a human being; they could therefore also be used politically. The contrite tears that the emperor Leo VI shed publicly over his fourth marriage at Christmas 906 were meant to illustrate that God had accepted his repentance and that the patriarch and the synod now needed to waive the punishment of his exclusion from the church community (Hinterberger 2006: 36–7). For the communicative function of emotions in general, Althoff 2000). As a ritual of cleansing, contrition and mourning could also usefully be used by the emperor as an effective sign in battle (Hinterberger 2006: 38–40).

Envy (*phthonos*, or frequently *baskania*, more rarely *zêlos*) is defined as "sorrow over the well-being of somebody else" (Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.* 11, 1 (372A); John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 28). Envy was usually directed at a socially close person, especially a neighbor or colleague, and the typical behavior of the envious person lay in accusation, calumniation, and defamation (*diabolê*, *sukophantia*, and *katalalia*). Many episodes of envy, particularly in historiographical texts, exhibit a similar pattern: a man is distinguished by courage, special skill, high education, and the like, and thereby wins the favor of the emperor. The emperor rewards him with high honors, extraordinary presents, and other signs of affection, and elevates him above his colleagues (mostly generals or civil servants), thus exciting their envy. The envious person creates mistrust in the emperor through intrigues, causing the emperor to doubt his former favorite's loyalty, and thereby eventually bringing about his fall. A typical example was the rise of the emperor's private secretary (*epi tou kanikleiou*) Theodoros Styppeiotes to become the confidant of Manuel I, leading to plotting against him by his colleague John Kamateros, and his subsequent fall (Hinterberger 2004: 300–3). The victim of envy *par excellence* whose existence was destroyed in this way was the victorious military leader, personified in Justinian's general, Belisarios. His fate became the myth and timeless symbol for the treachery and the destroying power of envy in the form of the "history of Belisarios" (Bakker and van Gemert 1988).

A further attribute of envy was self-destruction. Envy made the envious person blind to his/her own well-being in order to deprive the envied person of an

advantage. "*Phthonos* does not know advantage" is stated in various texts. A characteristic report by Michael Attaleiates (*Hist.* 37, 21–39, 18; Hinterberger 2003, 64) describes how, during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55), there was a battle between the Byzantine army and the Pechenegs. Since the governor of Bulgaria, the eunuch Basil Synkellos, envied the commander-in-chief, Michael Akolouthos, the success that a victory would bring him, he removed his troops from battle. The consequence was that the Byzantine army suffered a devastating defeat and Basil himself was killed in the general confusion.

The fact that envy was closely associated with the devil, as were arrogance and pride (*alazoneia* and *uperéfania*), played a decisive role in the Byzantine perception of envy. It was the devil who "invented" these passions, and they had a crucial role in his history (Photios, *Hom.* 12, 123, 34–124, 5). He was cast into the underworld for his disdain and arrogance; out of envy he enticed Adam and Eve to disregard God's divine commandment. Thus the devil was also simply known as the "envious" or the "envious demon." Satan's envy of humans, and in particular of the virtuous and saints, illustrated the destructive side of this passion, seeking to destroy that which appeared enviable without gaining it for oneself. This is not envy in the modern sense, for Satan was not perceived as wanting to be in the place or to possess the virtues of the envied one; rather, he despised their virtue, for he was also the *misokalos*, the one who hates the Good and wishes to destroy it. These aspects of *phthonos* and particularly the satanic *phthonos* are generally underestimated and wrongly reflected in translations. Envious humans were considered tools of Satan, used to pursue humans with his envy.

This diabolical connotation of envy is probably related to pre-Christian perceptions of a superhuman evil power, but it also relates to social conditions in Byzantium, which were particularly favorable for the emergence of envy. The Byzantine administration and the army were strictly hierarchized. This hierarchy, however, was not constant; there was no such thing as a fixed and hereditary affiliation to a social class in Byzantium. Since it was possible for anyone to ascend the social ladder, competition and rivalry were an everyday phenomenon, further strengthened by the absolute power of the emperor and his complete freedom to decide on promotions. Ecclesiastical hierarchies were similarly constructed to foster envy. Symeon the New Theologian described envy in connection with the election of the abbot in the monastery (Symeon the New Theologian, *Katech.* 18, 21–3). Theodoros Agallianos depicted a patriarchal clergy full of envy (Hinterberger 2004: 306–9). The satirist Mazaris (58, 20–60, 1) illustrated Byzantium as a society where, even in death, envy incessantly caused men to forge plots against each other.

Zêlotupia is strongly connected to *phthonos*. As a technical term, it refers to the jealousy between spouses or siblings more specifically. (Hinterberger 2009; for the modern term "jealousy" and its distinction from "envy:" Parrott 1991; for the cultural history of jealousy in modern times: Stearns 1989). While envy was clearly hypercognized in Byzantium, jealousy hardly played a part, compared to today, least of all in the form of jealousy between partners. This relates to a completely different understanding of interpersonal relations and the relationship between spouses in particular. John Chrysostom nevertheless depicted jealousy as one of the great evils of married life, in view of which it was not advisable to get married. He indicated a

specific behavior, a man's mistrust of his wife, or vice versa. There was a crucial difference between them, however, for the wife could never limit her husband in his freedom of movement to the same extent that he could her, and she could never encourage others to spy on her husband (John Chrysostom, *Virg.* 52). Only a small number of cases are referred to in literary texts. For example, Palladios in the fifth century reports that Evagrios Pontikos in Constantinople had had an affair with a married woman and that he fled to Palestine out of fear of the jealous husband (Palladios, *Hist. Laus.* 38, 3–7). There are hardly any reports of marital homicides as a result of jealousy. A jealous mistress of Manuel I tried to kill a rival with poison (Krumbacher 1894, 452). Michael Psellos described in detail the jealousy between the two daughters of Constantine VIII, the future empresses Zoe and Theodora (Michael Psellos, *Chron.* 5, 34 and 6, 62, 9–12), as well as Zoe's jealousy of the mistress of her husband, Constantine IX (6I 49). Jealousy plays a role in the conclusion of Theodoros Prodromos's twelfth-century novel *Rodanthe and Dosikles*, when Myrilla, in love with the hero Dosikles, tries to kill the heroine Rodanthe out of jealousy. But, overall, jealousy was simply not a major topic. This may also be because, in Byzantium, certain forms of what we nowadays call jealousy, like the competition for the acknowledgement of a third party, appear as facets of rivalry and envy between competitors, for example, over the favor of the emperor.

Finally, anger or wrath (*orgê* and *thumos*): these two terms are largely synonymous (*orgê* is sometimes considered as a form of *thumos*: John of Damascus, *Expo. fid.* 30, 7). In ancient Greek, the meaning of the word *thumos* was narrowed down from "a power that lends energy and propels to action" to "rage, anger/wrath" (Blösser 1998). In Byzantine texts, one can find both meanings. Although the Byzantines considered God in principle as *apathês* or passionless, they were aware that the Bible, notably the Old Testament, regularly mentions the wrath of God; disasters that befall mankind were regularly attributed to the wrath of God. Indeed, the term *theomênia*, literally "the wrath of God," also meant "natural disaster." Different authors tried to solve this contradiction by referring to the wrath of God as a metaphor and a misunderstanding of God's actions on the part of humans (Gregory of Nazianzos, *Carm.* 1, 2, 25, 371–98; Oberhaus 1991: 150–51; Photios, *Hom.* 4, 1, 40, 1–11).

The wrath of the all-powerful emperor was considered as particularly devastating, and the ideal of self-control by the ruler was developed in *Mirrors of Princes*, advisory texts for rulers, where special weight was placed on the control of anger (Agapetos Diakon. 36 and 55; Photios, *Ep.* 1, 1019–34 (letter to Tsar Boris); Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Basil. And.* 34–48; Prinzing 1988). The angry or wrathful ruler was nevertheless a common topic in literature. The emperor Basil I was depicted as an angry ruler even by sympathetic historians (Theophanes Continuatus V, 70 [312, 3–11]). Theodore Laskaris was described as particularly irascible (George Akropolites, *History*, *Hist.* 63, esp. 130, 6. 23–6). The emperor Theodosios I, enraged by an act of disobedience by the city of Thessalonike, executed 7,000 (or even 15,000) of its citizens in 390 (Karpozilos 1997, 190–192). As a result of this, he issued a law making provision for a 30-day period from the decree to execution of the capital punishment in order to provide the emperor with the opportunity to alter his judgment. The validity of this law, intended to protect the emperor, as well as his subjects,

from his uncontrolled anger was confirmed by the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates (1078–81), who reinstated it after it had fallen into oblivion (Michael Attaleiates, *Hist.* 223, 13–225, 11; Pérez Martín 2002: 339, n. 129 and 130).

Anger was often caused by an insult or defamation. Such episodes of anger are particularly informative in the context of Byzantine conventions of good behavior. The omission of due greetings and appropriate signs of respect, for example, clearly constituted a severe insult, to which the victim reacted with violent anger. This relates, above all, to adherence to the order among dignitaries at the imperial court and the respect that the inferior owed to those of higher standing in the hierarchy. The *parakoimomenos* Damianos provoked the wrath of Bardas, the *Caesar* and uncle of emperor Michael III, by not rising when he passed close by (Symeon Magister, *Chron.* 131, 31; Hinterberger 2006, 42). Likewise, Eirene Rhaoulaina, the wife of Constantine Palaiologos and second-highest woman at the court of Andronikos II, reacted with violent anger because Strategopoulina, an old lady, did not rise at her arrival (George Pachymeres, *Hist.* VIII 19 [III 173, 11–25]).

Many treatises on anger described how human wrath was initially expressed through insult, then argument, before anger progressed to violent confrontation. In the worst-case scenario, this could even lead to murder (Basil of Caesarea, *Hom.* 10, 3. 357D–360A; Gregory of Nazianzos, *Carm.* 1, 2, 25, 315–17; also see the compilation of excerpts from the writings of John Chrysostom by Theodoros Daphnopates: Durand 1993). Many surviving but infrequently preserved court decisions named anger as the crucial motive in murder cases, and denounced it as such (Macrides 1988, 522–5). At the same time, anger could be used as a mitigating circumstance. In the thirteenth century, Demetrios Chomatinos judged a case of homicide mildly, taking into account two mitigating circumstances: the anger/wrath of the perpetrator; and the state of satiation after lunch that had further intensified his anger (Demetrios Chomatinos, *Ponem. Diaph.* 118, esp. 383, 2–6. 22–4).

Following this discussion, several general characteristics of Byzantine emotions can be affirmed. Byzantine emotions were closely entwined with Christian religion and with the value system of Byzantine society. The fact that the emotions differ in many aspects from the equivalent modern emotions shows to what extent they are influenced by the society and culture to which they belong. Compared to today, it is noticeable that the contradiction of reason and emotion was less pronounced then. To the Byzantines, it was more important whether emotions were good or bad. In their view, emotions had a strong element of action, being both motivation and action. The study of Byzantine emotions will not only contribute to our understanding of Byzantine culture and its texts, but will also make us aware that the modern experience of emotions is only one of several possibilities.

FURTHER READING

Medievalists have shown some interest in the study of emotions for some time now, and scholars of medieval literature have started to devote themselves to the theme: see, for example, Walker Bynum 1997; Rosenwein 1998, 2001, 2002 and 2006; Jaritz 2003; Kasten et al.

2002a; Benthien et al. 2000. Especially useful from a philological point of view is Eming 2007. Byzantinists have not really tackled the subject, though see Kazhdan and Cutler 1991; Kazhdan 1991; Uthemann 1991. Also see Dihle 1966. On Evagrios and the passions, see Guillaumont and Guillaumont 1971. Althoff 1998 says more on the general topic of the wrathful ruler.

This chapter was translated by Nadine Schibille.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Having Fun in Byzantium

Shaun Tougher

In popular imagination the Byzantines are not much associated with fun. They tend to be viewed as po-faced prudes concerned more with spiritual welfare than frivolous jollity. They are renowned for their devotion to holy icons and their lionization of holy heroes such as Symeon the Stylite, who spent 40 years living atop a 50-foot-high column. W. B. Yeats has reflected and compounded this image of Byzantium as a place of mysticism rather than mirth (*Sailing to Byzantium*, 1927), though, to be fair, it has to be acknowledged that the Byzantines themselves were complicit in fostering this image. There are, of course, competing views of the Byzantines; their civilization is understood to be marked by complexity of procedure and by deadly deceitfulness. These images, too, are devoid of laughter.

However, Byzantinists and general enthusiasts know better. It has long been appreciated, for instance, that the Byzantines had a taste for satire (Tozer 1881). A prime example is the *Timarion*, a twelfth-century text which recounts the visit of a Byzantine student to the underworld (*Timarion*: Baldwin 1984). Following Alexiou's poser whether it is "Byzantinists, not the Byzantines themselves, who lack a sense of humour" (1989: 31), there has been a notable interest in the question of this aspect of Byzantine identity (Garland 1990; Haldon 2002a, 2002b; Maguire and Maguire 2007: esp. 135–56). Conclusions include that "ridicule [was] one of the primary features of Byzantine humour" (Garland 1990: 18), "the genres of Byzantine humour are not very different from those of our own culture" (Haldon 2002a: 71), and the Byzantines "needed to laugh, because their saints could never laugh but only smile" (Maguire and Maguire 2007: 158).

In this chapter, it is not my intention to explore Byzantine humorous literature in its own right (or even literature as a diverting pastime). Rather, I wish to distinguish between the issue of the Byzantine sense of humor and the issue of how the Byzantines had fun. My concern is to consider more popular forms of amusement in the Byzantine empire, primarily chariot racing and mimes (performers or actors particularly associated with crude and farcical comedy). These entertainments had their

origins in the ancient Greek world, and were hugely appreciated in the Roman empire (A. D. E. Cameron 1973: 244–7; Roueché 1993: 23–5): who can forget the chariot-racing segment in William Wyler's *Ben Hur* (1959)? For Byzantine chariot racing and mimes, I will be largely dependent on literature for information. Two main foci will guide my exploration: the emperors Julian the Apostate (361–3); and Michael III (842–67). Thus the Early and Middle Byzantine empires will be considered in particular, and this will facilitate observations on cultural changes over time in Byzantium. However, a range of other material will also be referred to in the course of the chapter.

Not Having Fun in Early Byzantium

The figure of Julian the Apostate often features in treatments of Byzantine humor, specifically satire, because he wrote a satire on himself, the *Misopogon*, meaning "beard-hater" (Tozer 1881: 234; Kyriakis 1973: 290; text and translation Wright 1913: 420–511). Rather than exploring this text (and its context) for what it tells us about Byzantine satirical literature, I will utilize it as a source of evidence for popular entertainment in the Early Byzantine empire. Other evidence will then be adduced to expand on the picture that the *Misopogon* provides. On the face of it, it might seem a little odd to commence with Julian, since he was a pagan and Byzantium is renowned as a Christian empire. But he was also the first emperor to have been born in Constantinople, and a nephew of Constantine the Great (306–37), the figure associated with the beginning of the Byzantine empire because of his favoring of Christianity over traditional Roman religion, and his refounding of the city of Byzantium as Constantinople. Despite Julian's own religious preference, he moved in the same cultural landscape and thereby his writings provide insights into early Byzantine society.

Julian's *Misopogon* was written during his stay in the ancient Hellenistic city of Antioch in Syria. The emperor arrived in the city in July 362, during the feast celebrating Adonis, and left in March of the following year, embarking on his doomed invasion of the Persian empire. Despite apparently keen expectation of a pleasurable stay in the city, Julian's time there proved a bitter experience. He made himself unpopular with the local elite as well as the general populace, and they did not endear themselves to him, either. Key issues in the clashes were the emperor's religious programme to revive paganism and his attempts to address economic difficulties and food shortages in the city. In addition, other aspects of Julian's lifestyle and habits aggravated the citizens of Antioch. The relationship between the emperor and the Antiochenes reached such a nadir that Julian was abused in public by satirical onslaughts in verse, probably in the context of the festivities for the Kalends, which marked the New Year (Gleason 1986). The satirical verses included the mocking of his beard, which was an important symbol for Julian of his status as a philosopher, but which was hardly fashionable for an emperor of the time. So full was Julian's beard it was joked that ropes could have been twisted from it. The emperor's response was not to produce a simple satire on the Antiochenes themselves. Typically he took a more devious

route, writing a satire ostensibly on himself concurring with their picture, but in reality sending them up savagely. This document was posted in Antioch outside the imperial palace, on the Tetrapylon of the Elephants. The *Misopogon* is a key source for the history of Julian's residence in Antioch. It presents the emperor's version, of course, but also records some of the specific abuse that he received (for other details of the abuse see the account of the contemporary historian Ammianus Marcellinus 22.14.3). There emerges clearly the distaste for his earnest paganism, and for paganism *per se*, as well as his own various frustrations with the members of Antioch's city council. The emperor alleges, however, that what particularly caused his unpopularity was his attitude towards popular entertainment in the city.

Several times in the *Misopogon*, Julian refers to his lack of enthusiasm for, if not downright antipathy towards, chariot racing and theatrical performances, especially those of the mimes. The emperor talks of how he virtually banished himself from the theaters, and only allowed the *thymele* (the altar of Dionysus) entrance to his court on one day of the year, New Year's Day. Likewise, his small entourage of seven intimates were no lovers of the theater, and only attended rarely, and even then not all at once. Presumably as philosophers and intellectuals, they disdained such frivolities. Julian makes it clear that he did not prevent others from going to the theaters, but did not conceal his contempt for the pastime. He declares that he cared less for the dancers and the theaters than for frogs in a pond. Julian compares his own reactions to such entertainments to those of the Celts, whom he identifies himself with in general in the *Misopogon*. He relates the story of how a Cappadocian who had been influenced by the tastes of the Antiochenes staged a display of theatrical entertainment for the Celts, including dancers and a cotylist (a type of mime). The Celts, however, were not impressed with the dancers, and "thought they were like men stricken with nympholepsy." Julian asserts that the Celts, like him, thought the theater was utterly ridiculous. He recalls that he had attended the theater three or fours times as a youth, but only because he had no freedom of choice, having been compelled to attend by a relative.

As for horse racing, the emperor says that he hated it more than debtors hate market-places. He only attended during feasts for the gods, and even then only stayed for six races, not for the whole day. Once again it is clear that he did not hide his dislike of the events. He contrasts his behavior with that of other members of his family, who had watched the races all day: his cousin the emperor Constantius II (337–61); his maternal uncle Julian; and his half-brother the Caesar Gallus. Interestingly, Ammianus Marcellinus comments on Constantius II's ability to indulge the witticisms of the populace at equestrian games during his visit to Rome in 357 (Amm. Marc. *History*: 16.10.13.). In a celebrated section of the *Misopogon*, Julian identifies a formative influence on his character and tastes—his tutor the eunuch Mardonius. The eunuch warned the young Julian off going to the theater and to the horse-races with the other boys, and advised him instead to read about such things in Homer. In the *Iliad*, he could find the description of a chariot race; instead of seeing the pantomime dancers of his own day, Julian could read about the Phaeacian youths dancing in the *Odyssey*, where he could also enjoy the songs of Phemius and Demodocus.

At the same time as conveying his deep distaste for horse racing and theatrical entertainments, Julian also conveys the great popularity and importance of such pastimes to the general population, and the fun they derived from them. While some may have concurred with the views of the emperor, the impression created is that these would have been in the minority. Julian's own relatives clearly thought that it was important to attend the theaters and races, and to look as if they enjoyed them, even if in reality they might not have. Julian's presentation of the Antiochenes indicates their devotion to such pastimes, and the importance that they attached to them. It was Julian's disdain for the dancers and the theaters which united the citizens of Antioch in their hatred of him. They were irritated by the fact that he appointed no one to oversee matters relating to the mimes and charioteers, as Constantius had done. They complained that "by ignoring the stage and mimes and dancers," Julian had ruined Antioch. The local officials in the city had always ensured that they funded such entertainments, and Julian jokes that there were more dancers, flute players and mimes in Antioch than citizens. There is more, however, to the emperor's picture of fun in the Syrian city than just charioteers and dancers. The city is portrayed as devoted to pleasure and indulgence in many forms, and of having a *joie de vivre* out of sympathy with Julian's own tastes and values. References to food, drink, sex, gossip, fancy clothing, bathing, festivals, and feasts abound. The emperor asserts that the Antiochenes said that he should "show to this laughter-loving people all sorts of fine spectacles, mimes, dancers, shameless women, boys who in their beauty emulate women, and men who have not only their jaws shaved smooth but their whole bodies too … yes and feasts too and general festivals, not, by Zeus, the sacred ones at which one is bound to behave with sobriety" (Julian, *Misopogon*: 443).

The contrast of these enthusiasms with those of the serious and sober Julian is evident. For the emperor, the Antiochenes were immodest and immoral, and he rebuked their effeminacy and vaunted his own masculinity. The reference to the continued enjoyment of the general festivals is of interest, though, given Julian's indications of the degree of the Christianization of the city. Christianity was not necessarily to be the death of the traditional entertainments of the pagan past.

Charioteers and Mimes in Early Byzantium

Julian's *Misopogon* indicates that there were two great enthusiasms in particular among the populace who sought entertainment—the hippodrome and the theater. The heroes of the day were the charioteers and the mimes. This is easily borne out by a range of other evidence. The infamous massacre of 7,000 civilians in Thessalonike which occurred in the reign of Theodosios I (379–95), in 390, was sparked by the fact that the people had rioted due to the arrest of a favorite charioteer, who had been incarcerated for making sexual advances towards the general of Illyricum, Butheric (Sozomen, *Church History* 7.25.3; McLynn 1994: 315–23). It is notable that Theodosios's reaction to an earlier riot in Antioch, the riot of the statues in 387, had been to close the hippodrome and the theaters, as well as the baths (Libanius *Or.* 20.6). Four years after the massacre in Thessalonike, Theodosios was to decree that

images of charioteers, mimes, and pantomimes were only to be exhibited at hippodromes or theaters, concerned about images of such disreputable people being displayed in proximity to imperial images (*Theodosian Code* 15.7.12). The base for the obelisk set up in the hippodrome in Constantinople under Theodosios includes in its decoration chariot racing as well as musicians and dancers.

It seems that the charioteers reached the acme of their popularity and fame in the sixth century, as illustrated by the career of Porphyrios (A. D. E. Cameron 1973). Porphyrios was celebrated in public monuments set up in Constantinople, though during his career he also raced at Antioch, in 507. It is also clear that he raced for both the Blue and the Green factions. In antiquity, the entertainers and their fans had been divided into different factions denoted by color (Red, White, Blue and Green), but by the sixth century the Blues and the Greens dominated (A. D. E. Cameron 1976). This is well illustrated by the most famous Byzantine riot of them all, the Nika Riot of 532, which occurred in Constantinople during the reign of Justinian I (527–65). The riot began in the hippodrome, when the usually opposing factions decided to join forces against the government. The contemporary chronicler Malalas tells us that the riot broke out during the chariot-races called the Ides (John Malalas, *Chronicle* 18.71). He relates that the two factions appealed to the emperor to be merciful to members of them up until the 22nd race, but when he did not respond they began to riot after the races. It is well known that the hippodrome was not just a forum for public entertainment but also for public protest. An account of the riot is also provided by the historian Prokopios (*Wars* 1.24), another contemporary, who hailed from Caesarea in Palestine and worked for the leading general Belisarios.

Prokopios has much else to reveal about popular entertainment of the day, especially in relation to Antonina (the wife of Belisarios) and Theodora (the wife of Justinian), and especially in his infamous *Secret History* (Webb 1997: 128). He asserts that Antonina's father and grandfather had been charioteers who raced in both Constantinople and Thessalonike, while her mother had worked in the theater, probably as an actress, though Prokopios casts her as a prostitute (*Secret History* 1.11); there was a fine line between the roles in Byzantine thought anyway (*Theodosian Code* 15.7.8). Theodora was also from a family in the entertainment business. Her father had been Keeper of the Bears for the Green faction in Constantinople, and Theodora and her sisters worked in the theater for the Blues, though once again Prokopios emphasizes a sexual role (*Secret History* 9.2–12). He relates that she performed with the mimes, and was admired for her comic ability (*Secret History* 9.13). He also describes one of her acts (*Secret History* 9.20–21). Wearing only a girdle she would lie down and have herself sprinkled with grains of barley, which geese would then eat off her. Prokopios includes this to illustrate her shameless behavior, but modern commentators have interpreted this performance as an enactment of the myth of Leda and the swan (Maguire and Maguire 2007: 116). Whether there is any truth in what Prokopios tells us about Theodora in the *Secret History* is a moot point (Brubaker 2004), but presumably his indication of the types of entertainment performed by mimes is based on reality.

The mimes and pantomimes were clearly a major feature of public entertainment in the theaters (A. D. E. Cameron 1973: 230–32). However, it is clear that entertain-

ers could also perform in private households, not just in public venues. An arresting example of a jester-like figure found in a private context in the fifth century is that of Zercon the Moor, who features in the history of Priskos (Blockley 1983: 286–9). Zercon was not an entertainer by profession, it seems, but rather one as a result of his personal appearance and speech. His physical characteristics and stammering induced laughter. He was short and a hunchback, his feet were deformed, and his nose was so flat that only the nostrils indicated its presence. Having been given to the general Aspar when he was in Libya, he ended up in the service of the Hun leaders Attila and Bleda, having been captured in Thrace. Bleda was much taken with Zercon, entertained because of both the amusing things he said and his funny walk. The Moor attended Bleda at feasts and on campaign, when he wore a comic suit of armor. After the death of Bleda, Attila gifted Zercon to the Western Roman general Aetius, who had him returned to Aspar. Zercon later returned to the court of Attila to reclaim his wife, whom Bleda had given to him. When he made his request, "his appearance, his clothing, his voice and the words which he spoke all jumbled together (for he mixed Latin, Hunnic and Gothic) … put all in a good humour and caused all to burst into uncontrollable laughter, except Attila" (Blockley 1983: 289).

Thus it can be seen that the Roman popular cultural forms of chariot racing and mimes persisted in early Byzantium (existing in tandem with the Christianization of the empire). Julian (and Attila) would seem to be the exception in exhibiting (dignified?) indifference to such fun.

Having Too Much Fun in Middle Byzantium

In contrast to Julian, an emperor who seems to have enjoyed himself rather too much is Michael III (842–67), the last emperor of the Amorian dynasty. Michael is famous for coming to a nasty end when he was still a young man in his late 20s, brutally murdered in his bedroom by a group of conspirators headed by his one-time friend Basil the Macedonian. Basil established one of the major dynasties of the Byzantine empire, the Macedonian dynasty (867–1056), the business of which was to blacken the character of Michael and justify his assassination. A great deal of literature was produced to this end, the most famous being the *Life of Basil*, which depicted the last Amorian as decadent, immoral, and unfit to rule, detailing his reprehensible love-life and social life (Jenkins 1948): a very naughty, fun-loving boy. Some Byzantinists have sought to defend his reputation, looking beyond the Macedonian slurs, and there is evidence for alternative traditions about the emperor and his life (Kislinger 1987), though it can also be argued that the Macedonian picture is based on some reality. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the stories serve as illustrations not necessarily of the reality of Michael III but of the possibilities for fun in the Byzantine world.

In general, Michael is depicted as something of a party-animal, surrounded by a tight group of like-minded men. He had a great enthusiasm for chariot racing in particular, taking part in races at the palace of St Mamas (Genesios 4.19; Georgius Monachus Continuatus, 33). The emperor even stood as godfather to children of

fellow-charioteers, as well as his companions in general (Theophanes Continuatus 4.21; *Life of Basil* 27). Michael's love of hunting is also reported, and his equine passion extended to the building of luxury stables for his horses, which earned him a teasing rebuke from a celebrated joker, Peter the Ptochomagistros, who compared his achievement unfavorably to that of Justinian I, the builder of Hagia Sophia (Georgius Monachus Continuatus, 19). One account of the first meeting of Basil the Macedonian and Michael has the theme of horses, too, for Basil was able to tame a wild horse belonging to the emperor (Georgius Monachus Continuatus, 7). Michael is also portrayed as participating in hi-jinks which mocked the church, being cast in the role of a mime himself (Ljubarskij 1987). The emperor and twelve of his friends would parade in public dressed as bishops, aping the liturgy. One of them, Theophilos "the Pig" ("Gryllos," though this name also has associations with comic performers: Maguire and Maguire 2007: 110–11), took the part of the patriarch of Constantinople (Theophanes Continuatus, *Life of Basil* 21–2; and *Ignatios* 528, which tells us that Theophilos was a *protospatharios*, but also describes him as a "jester and mime"). On one occasion it is said that they encountered a procession of the real patriarch, and broke into lewd songs (Theophanes Continuatus, *Life of Basil* 21). On another occasion, Michael summoned his mother Theodora to see the patriarch Ignatios, and when she knelt to receive the blessing of the patriarch, who was really Gryllos in disguise, he turned around, lifted his robes and broke wind in her face (Theophanes Continuatus 4.39; *Life of Basil* 23). It was also reported that Michael joked that "Theophilos is my patriarch, Photios is the patriarch of the Caesar, Ignatios of the Christians" (*Ignatios* 528). This Gryllos is possibly to be identified with the *patrikios* Himerios who was nicknamed Choiros ("Pig") by Michael due to his physical appearance, and who was one of the emperor's boon companions and had a particular talent for blowing out candles by breaking wind (Theophanes Continuatus 4.21; *Life of Basil* 27). As for Michael's love-life, it was alleged that although he was married to a certain Eudokia Dekapolitissa, he kept as his mistress another Eudokia, Eudokia Ingerina, whom he married to Basil the Macedonian (Georgius Monachus Continuatus, 23). But the Macedonian sources hinted at other sexual proclivities of the emperor, referring to his attachment to Basilikinos in lurid terms (*Life of Basil* 25), though this then raises questions about the nature of his relationship with Basil himself (Tougher 1999).

Charioteers and Mimes in Middle Byzantium

If nothing else, the stories related concerning Michael III explode the mirage of the po-faced Byzantines. No doubt the Byzantine audience were supposed to be shocked by the emperor's shenanigans and profanities, but they certainly offer insights into the potential for fun in Byzantium. The enthusiasms ascribed to Michael, particularly for crude comedy and equine entertainment, are evidenced elsewhere in our sources. The continued existence of mimes in Byzantium is well recognized (Tinnefeld 1974; Ivanov 1992). One of the episodes in the seventh-century *Miracles of St Artemios* features an Alexandrian comic actor who in the reign of Herakleios

(610–41) accompanied one of the social elite to the church of St John the Baptist in Constantinople where was located the shrine of St Artemios (Artemios: Miracle 17, Crisafulli and Nesbitt 1997: 108–15). The aristocrat was seeking a cure for his hernia, and slept by the tomb of the saint overnight. The actor had to remain in the main body of the church, where he was locked in. Awaking in the night and needing to urinate, he had to go in the church. Immediately he was afflicted with a hernia, and cried out in alarm (in the funny dialect of Alexandria, comments the author), lamenting his situation. His cries awoke his companion, who assumed, however, that the actor was playing a joke! The behavior of the actor amused others too, at dinner later, even though they knew his hernia was real. The author observes that it was the social élite in particular who enjoyed such entertainment. Other actors are met in the tenth-century *Life of Euthymios*, in the context of dinner entertainment in the imperial palace during the reign of Leo VI (886–912) (Karlin-Hayter 1970: 42–5). Stylianos Zaoutzes, the emperor's father-in-law, wanted to discredit the monk Euthymios in the eyes of the emperor, for he feared that Leo would make Euthymios, the emperor's spiritual father, patriarch. Therefore Stylianos tried to suborn the actors who were performing at an imperial dinner, as was customary, to include anti-Euthymios material in their routines. The actor Titlivakios refused, but Lampoudios consented. However, the diners did not appreciate Lampoudios' attack on the monk, and the emperor expelled him from the feast. Two centuries later, we find Romanos Boilas played the part of a buffoon or jester at the court of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) (Garland 1990: 7–8), as Gryllos had done at the court of Michael III.

Regarding Michael III's enthusiasm for chariot racing, there is much less supporting evidence for this continuing to be a popular form of entertainment in Byzantium. Known Byzantine charioteers are rare; the main example is that of Ouraniakos, to whom the emperor Constantine V (741–75) was especially devoted (A. D. E. Cameron 1973: 258; Auzépy 1997: 265 and n. 412), though there is also the case of Jephthah in the eleventh century (Mango 1981: 347). This contrast with the picture presented by the early period raises the issue of cultural change over the course of the history of the empire.

The seventh century AD is often understood as marking a key period of transformation for Byzantium, the passing of the traditions of the ancient world and the birth of the medieval empire. This has been explored with reference to public entertainment, as well as public bathing, by Cyril Mango (1981). He argues that by the middle Byzantine period, the only hippodrome remaining in use was the one in Constantinople. In addition, chariot racing was no longer a competitive sport, but was part of the imperial festivities held there, and even then only a minor part. We hear of other forms of entertainment in the hippodrome, such as staged combats. During the reign of Theophilos (829–42) there was a display of the skill of an Arab prisoner of war, who was renowned for his ability to deploy two lances while on horseback (Theophanes Continuatus 3.23). This skill was mocked by Theodore Krateros, a eunuch, who was then challenged by the emperor to compete with the Arab. Theodore duly mounted a horse, and using only one lance was able to dismount his opponent. This seems to be the first attested instance of a joust. In the tenth century on one occasion the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–9) not only

watched chariot races in the hippodrome but staged a mock battle between his soldiers in order to train them. The historian Leo the Deacon (*History* 4.6) reports that the spectators were so frightened that they fled in panic, and that some were trampled to death as a result. Niketas Choniates in his history relates that during the reign of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–5), there were to be seen in the hippodrome, in addition to horse racing, gymnastic games, tight-rope walking, and hare coursing (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 160). As for the chariot racing encountered under Michael III, it is important to note that this was conducted in a private setting; Michael and his friends were entertaining themselves using the facilities of an imperial palace not accessible to the general public (Mango 1981: 348).

Another instance of private imperial entertainment is described by Niketas Choniates in his account of the reign of Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) (Niketas Choniates, *Hist.* 280–81). The emperor staged entertainments at the palace of Blachernai, and in addition to chariot racing there were gymnastic contests, including running. Slapstick was also part of the fun. A eunuch played the part of the eparch of Constantinople, mounted on a mock horse. This eunuch also took the role of the *mapparius* for the gymnastic games, and during the running, whenever he bent down to start the race, a noble youth kicked him up the backside to comic effect.

The issue of public and private entertainment also has relevance for the mimes in Byzantium. The examples we have encountered have mostly been found in private contexts, and as has been seen, as with the charioteers, they were not all professionals. It seems that the place of mimes in Byzantine society was affected by seventh-century transformations too. Discussing the extinction of the theater in Byzantium, Mango notes that Canon 51 of the Council in Trullo, held in 691–2 during the first reign of the emperor Justinian II (685–95), issued a general ban on mimes and pantomimes, as well as on wild animal shows. Other canons forbade clerics and monks to attend games in the hippodrome and performances in the theater, and outlawed ancient festivals, including the Kalends, and certain other ancient cultural behavior too (Mango 1981: 344, 349). It should be noted, however, that the frescoes in the eleventh-century cathedral of St Sophia in Kiev depicting the Constantinopolitan hippodrome include the figures of clowns or jesters, as well as musicians and acrobats (Ivanov 1992: 131; Maguire and Maguire 2007: 30). In their commentaries on the canons of the Council, the twelfth-century canonists John Zonaras and Theodore Balsamon also refer to the continued existence of the mimes (Maguire and Maguire 2007: 115 and 136).

Byzantines and the Natural World

So far this chapter has largely been concerned with charioteers and mimes. To conclude, however, I will focus on another aspect of having fun in Byzantium: reaction to spectacles of the natural world. In recent years there has been extensive media and popular reaction in Britain to sightings of unusual animals. Particularly striking was the reaction to the northern bottle-nosed whale, over 19 feet long, which became stranded in the River Thames in January 2006, making its way upstream as far as

Chelsea. For several days the British media documented both the attempt to rescue the whale and the subsequent post-mortem on the whale after the attempt failed. The presence of the whale in the Thames attracted a large crowd (numbered at 3,000) on the banks of the river, which avidly observed the whale and the rescue attempt. Battersea Bridge had to be closed to traffic due to the numbers of spectators. The rarity of the incident accounted for the fascination of the crowd, who reportedly cheered when the whale surfaced and spouted water and also when it was towed towards deeper water. One observer, who could not get a good view, was quoted as saying that they were going home to "watch it on the telly" (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4635440.stm). There have been sightings of other animals, such as killer whales in the Firth of Forth as far up as the Forth Rail Bridge in January 2007, (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/6313907.stm) and a sperm whale active in the Firth of Forth in March 1997. Thus the natural world can be spectacle and entertainment for us, and it was the same for the Byzantines.

Once again, Julian's *Misopogon* provides an entrée to the subject. Among the diversions Mardonius advised Julian to seek in literature rather than in reality was the enjoyment of beautiful plants; as with horse-races, dancers, and bards, Homer provides delightful examples, such as the wooded island of Calypso, the cave of Circe, and the garden of Alcinous. This suggests that nature was indeed appreciated as a source of pleasure. The modern instances of reaction to whales finds a parallel in an instance from the sixth century, documented by the historian Prokopios (*Wars* 7.29.9–16), though there is an element of fear too. He records how a whale had become celebrated over a period of 50 years in the vicinity of Constantinople. The whale (apparently over 45 feet long at the time of its death), which had sunk boats and plagued others, had been given a name—Porphyrios (the same as the famed charioteer: was there an association?). It was eventually killed in the reign of Justinian I, having chased some dolphins and become stranded on mud at the mouth of the Sangarios River. A mixture of fascination and fear also marks the chronicler Theophanes' account of the icebergs which reached as far as Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century (Theoph. *Chron.* AM 6255). The phenomenon was witnessed by Theophanes himself (or perhaps his source: Mango and Scott 1997: lviii–lix), who was a child at the time. He describes how severe cold froze the sea and rivers in October 763, and how in February 764 ice was carried down into the Bosporus. He reminisces that he climbed on one of the icebergs and played on it along with about 30 boys of his own age. While he and others clearly enjoyed walking on the ice, there were those who were more scared and bewildered by it. In passing he also notes that some of his pet animals died, which indicates that it was not just nature in the raw that appealed to Byzantines. Indeed, the sixth-century chronicler Malalas records the diverting account of how a dog was used as part of a travelling entertainer's routine during the reign of Justinian I (John Malalas, *Chronicle*: 18.51; also see Scott in this volume). The entertainer was from Italy, and his dog performed a range of tricks in the market-places. It was able to identify the owners of individual rings, and was also able to select coins according to the emperors engraved upon them.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken as its main focus chariot-racing and mimes, approaching them through the prisms of the *Misopogon* of Julian and stories about the emperor Michael III. Along the way, however, other aspects of having fun in Byzantium have been touched upon, such as music, festivals, dancing, hunting, jousting, gymnastics, acrobatics, and sex, as well as the natural world. The investigation has highlighted in particular the issue of cultural change between the Early and Middle Byzantine empires, with the shift from the ancient to the medieval world. The issue of public and private entertainment has also been emphasized. Despite the limitations of the evidence for the Middle Byzantine period, which tends to favor both Constantinople and imperial life, it is clear that having fun was very much part of the Byzantine experience, and that there is further scope for reinforcing this message: the popular image of Byzantium can still work its power.

FURTHER READING

For general surveys of everyday life in Byzantium see Talbot Rice 1967 and Rautman 2006. There is also the five-volume study of Koukoules (1948–52). Such surveys, however, can be problematic, as they can lend themselves to generalization and obscure complexities of the evidence. For criticism of Koukoules see, for instance, Mango 1981. There is also Angelidi (ed.) 1989, a collection of papers by a wide range of contributors. Yet this approach can have its problems, too, as the subject matter discussed can be very specific and is not comprehensive. Mango 1981 is an extremely valuable treatment of aspects of daily life across the span of the Byzantine empire, focused on bathing and on public entertainment, highlighting the issues of paucity of evidence and cultural change. For charioteers in the early Byzantine period see especially A. D. E. Cameron 1973. For mimes see Tinnefeld 1974 and now the important study of Webb 2008 (which came out too late for me to use here). The study of sex in Byzantium is limited, but see for instance James (ed.) 1999. The question of the Byzantine sense of humor has attracted some concerted attention more recently: Garland 1990; Haldon 2002a; and Maguire and Maguire 2007. Regarding the natural world as a source of pleasure, the Byzantine garden has been receiving an increasing amount of study in recent years: see Littlewood, Maguire, and Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds) 2002. As for animals, those in Byzantine parks have received particular attention: Ševčenko 2002.

PART II

God and the World

CHAPTER TWELVE

Byzantine Views of God and the Universe

Mary Cunningham

How does one think of God? Christians living in different ages (not to mention adherents of other world faiths) may answer this question in various ways. Some will assert that God is unknowable, transcendent and ubiquitous, while others will picture him as an ancient, majestic figure in heaven, known also through his Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, and through the person of the Holy Spirit. What is perhaps most remarkable is that these various beliefs are apparently held simultaneously: the more literal conception does not contradict the philosophical one. The reason that this is possible is because Christianity as a faith is founded on paradoxes: God, the transcendent Creator, who in his triune state is eternal and unknowable, not only chose to create the material world out of nothing, but subsequently entered it as a human being, in the form of Jesus Christ.

The Byzantines, like most other mainstream Christians, held spiritual and more literal perceptions of God in careful balance. Thus we find the theologian writing under the pseudonym of Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite, probably writing in Syria in the fifth century, resorting to negative terms and then negating even these in his attempt to express the nature of God who is beyond all being, for "[the Godhead] is … beyond every assertion, being the perfect and unique cause of things, and, by virtue of its pre-eminently simple and absolute nature, free of every limitation, beyond every limitation; it is also beyond every denial" (Luibhéid 1987: 141). Mystics meanwhile expressed their understanding of God as an encounter. Diadochos of Photike, also living in the fifth century, described the goal of spiritual endeavor as divine love which confers a feeling of peace and joy (Diadochos: Rutherford 2000: 129), while Symeon the New Theologian in late tenth-century Constantinople beheld God as a vision of light (McGuckin 2001: 114; Maloney 1975: no. 21). At the same time, God could be envisaged more biblically as the anthropomorphic figure in whose image and likeness human beings were created. Christ, as Incarnate Son of God, could be depicted in icons or described in texts as Pantokrator ("All Ruler"), Good Shepherd, teacher, or infant, held in the arms of his mother, Mary. More intriguingly,

however, a few Byzantine images depict both Father and Son, with the former represented symbolically as the Ancient of Days or as an enigmatic hand appearing from heaven (McKay 1997; Michael 2005).

God: How Did the Byzantines Theologize?

The starting point for the Byzantines' understanding or experience of God was scripture. Although the Bible was not seen as the direct voice of God to humanity, as in Islam, but rather as revelation mediated through the voices of Moses (believed to be the author of the first five books of the Bible), the prophets, and other inspired writers, it did represent the most authoritative witness to God's continuing relationship with creation. Following the tradition of the earliest Christians, the Byzantines accepted the Old Testament as Christian scripture, while the New Testament represented its completion. Theologically this makes perfect sense since the various books of the New Testament build on and explain the prophecies of the Old. It is important to note, however, that the Byzantines did not use the same version of the Old Testament that is accepted in most Christian Churches today. The Greek Septuagint, translated from the Hebrew probably in the third century BC (an endeavor that Orthodox Christians believed to be divinely inspired) not only differs from the Masoretic Hebrew text in key passages such as Isaiah 7: 14, but also orders various books differently and includes some that have been designated "Apocrypha" in Western Churches (Louth 2001: xl–xlvii).

God's relationship with humankind obviously begins with his creation of the universe and everything within it, as expounded in Genesis. These first chapters of the Bible also provide some of the essential foundations for the Jewish and Christian understanding of the nature and intentions of God. The doctrine that he created the universe *out of nothing*, although formally recognized only in the middle of the second century AD (May 1994), soon became a key proposition, implying both that God, who is uncreated, is completely independent of his creation and second, that creation is contingent on him, both in its inception and continuing existence. God created the universe and *saw that it was good* (Gen 1: 9, 12, 18, etc.). This teaching, implying that the cosmos and all that is within it are fundamentally blessed, set Orthodox Christians apart from gnostics and other dualists who persisted in viewing the material world as evil, created by a secondary power who worked in eternal opposition to a transcendent, spiritual god (Jonas 1958; Rudolph 1985). Byzantine theologians and preachers continued to see dualism, which sets God apart from the created universe, as a serious threat, lurking in the teachings of Iconoclasts as well as in the more explicit doctrines of dualist sects such as the Bogomils (Obolensky 1948; Runciman 1946). Finally, Genesis reveals that God *created human beings in his image and likeness* (Gen 1: 27). If interpreted literally, this verse implies that God has an anthropomorphic form. More importantly, however, the teaching explained for Jews and Christians both why God remained involved in human destiny, even after the Fall, and how human beings possess the potential to become like God (*theosis*) both by means of spiritual endeavor and by divine grace. The Byzantine Church, as we

shall see later, maintained a more positive view of human nature, even in the fallen world, than did its Western counterpart, which after Augustine stressed much more the shared inheritance of original sin.

Christian commentators argued from as early as the second century that God as Trinity is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. By AD 325 (the Council of Nicaea) they were upholding the doctrine that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-eternal and of one essence: this is implicit in the writings of the New Testament, even if it is not expressed formally (Behr 2001). Passages referring to Christ that appear contradictory, such as "The Father and I are one" (John 10: 30) and "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13: 32), were explained on the basis of the fundamental paradox of Orthodox Christology, namely that Christ was both God *and* man. The ecumenical councils, mainly in response to controversial views of the precise relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, did employ unscriptural terms such as "homoousios" (of one essence), borrowed from pagan philosophy, to express this relationship, but they justified this on the grounds that these were consistent with scriptural revelation about God (Kelly 1977; Pelikan 1971). Heretical, or alternative, views of the Trinitarian God continued to challenge bishops and emperors throughout the Byzantine period; the development of formal definitions reflected creative, or inspired, efforts of discernment on the part of all those who were involved in these discussions.

More mystical views of God appear primarily in texts associated with ascetic or monastic members of the Byzantine Church. The primary goal of ascetics was not merely to separate themselves from the rest of the world, mortify their bodies, or eschew sexual relations, but to discover a close relationship with God. *Hesychia*, translated variously as "stillness," "silence," or "tranquility," indicated from as early as the fourth century both a physical and a spiritual state. It was the goal of monastics who sought to achieve "quiet conversation" with God. Spiritual writers, as we have seen, express the nature of this experience in various ways. Whereas Diadochos, writing in the fifth century, describes it as an interior relationship with Christ, a feeling of overwhelming love which may be induced by meditation on the name "Jesus" (Rutherford 2000: 74–5), Pseudo-Dionysios prefers to employ negative terminology. God is intangible, invisible and unimaginable, "a truly mysterious darkness of unknowing" (Pseudo-Dionysios: Luibhéid 1987: 137). Maximos the Confessor, building on Pseudo-Dionysian theology in the seventh century, affirms that "God is one, without beginning, incomprehensible, possessing in his totality the full power of being, fully excluding the notion of time and quality in that he is inaccessible to all and not discernible by any being on the basis of any natural representation" (Berthold 1985: 129). In the fourteenth century, Gregory Palamas refined this apophatic core of mystical theology, affirming that whereas the essence of God is unknowable, he may be apprehended in his energies. These divine activities permeate the whole of creation and human beings may participate in them by grace (Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware 1995: 382). The energies are Trinitarian, so may be manifested in different ways. Perhaps the most vivid scriptural example is the light which shone from Christ at the scene of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor. According to Palamas, this is the same

light that saints perceive when at prayer; it will also be seen at the end of time, when Christ returns at the Second Coming (Meyendorff 1974b).

Jesus Christ represented for Orthodox Byzantines, as for most Christians in any era, the main intermediary between the divine and created worlds. From as early as the late first century, Christians recognized him not only as an exceptional human teacher, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, but also as the Son of God and the pre-existing Word of God through whom all things were created (John 1: 1–4). It took five ecumenical councils, called mainly in order to counter alternative or "heretical" views of how the Trinity is constituted and how Christ, the Word, combines human and divine natures in one person, to define Orthodox doctrine; that Chalcedonian, or "two-nature," Christology continued to be a major preoccupation is attested by treatises, hymns, homilies, and icons throughout the Byzantine period.

The faithful encountered Christ in various ways, both physically and spiritually. The Church viewed the sacrament of baptism, the formal rite of initiation into the Christian Church, symbolically as a "rebirth" into life "in Christ." According to imagery first used by the apostle Paul, individual Christians represent the "members" of Christ's body (I Corinthians 12: 27). Another commonly employed image was that of "marriage" between Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, and his Church (Matthew 9: 15; 25: 1; Psalms 19: 5). This reciprocal relationship, which for Christians meant complete participation in the body of Christ, was maintained above all in the weekly celebration of the Eucharist (I Corinthians 10: 16–17). Such a literal, or existential, understanding of the presence of Christ in the eucharistic offering appears in the writings of the early Fathers (Meyendorff 1974a: 201–2), although we also occasionally find more symbolic interpretations in mystical writers such as Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite (Luibhéid 1987: 146): "The reception of the most divine eucharist is a *symbol* of participation in Christ." The great feasts of the liturgical year also represented occasions when Christ, as well as Mary the Theotokos, could be encountered; homilies and hymns, using typology, dramatic dialog, and rhetorical emphasis, seek to involve the faithful in biblical events. Byzantine Christians, thus aided by sacramental experience and liturgical instruction, must have understood the incarnational theology that was elaborated especially after the period of Iconoclasm (730–87 and 815–43). Saints, relics, and icons were also seen as vehicles for spiritual apprehension of Christ since, as the eighth-century theologian, John of Damascus argued, all of these reflected to some degree the glory of their divine prototype (Anderson 1980).

The Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity, played a somewhat less prominent, but equally important, role in the lives of Orthodox Christians. Sent down at Pentecost to inspire and guide the apostles in their Christian mission (Acts 2: 1–4), the Spirit was believed to be active in human beings and throughout creation, infusing these with divine beauty and reason. Whereas Paul and other early Christian writers such as the author of the *Didache* refer to prophets and healers being inspired directly by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12: 1–11; Staniforth 1987: 187–99), however, such unregulated activities had largely been eradicated from the Church by the end of the second century AD. Instead, Byzantine theologians refer to the essential part played by the Spirit in enabling human beings to reach spiritual perfection

through both the sacraments and ascetic endeavor (Meyendorff 1974a: 168–79). The full equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son was upheld by Byzantine theologians in the debate over the *filioque*, which surfaced as a source of contention between East and West from the ninth century onwards (Pelikan 1974: 183–98; *filioque* discussed by Louth in this volume). It is likely that even if less-educated people did not fully understand the complexities of Trinitarian doctrine, they did recognize the three persons of the Trinity as separate, yet equal, hypostases (modes of existence) of the one godhead.

The Universe

The Byzantines' view of the universe was, like their society, hierarchical. The cosmos, pictured in accordance with the first and last books of the Bible, Genesis and Revelation, consisted of heaven at the top and the underworld, or abyss, below, with the created, physical world that we inhabit somewhere in between. This literal interpretation was probably dominant throughout the Byzantine period, although more scientific views may also have prevailed at various times among the educated classes (Mango 1980: 166–76). The latter might well have accepted the view of the Roman geographer Ptolemy that the earth, a solid sphere, lies at the center of a revolving universe made up of the planets and, somewhat further away, the stars that follow fixed paths around the outer hemisphere (Neugebauer 1975). The more scientific world view did not exclude an allegorical interpretation of Genesis; as today, it is likely that educated Christians in the Byzantine period were able to discern parallels between astronomical and biblical descriptions of the universe. In addition, patristic theologians believed that God invested the universe with its own dynamism; this allows the possibility both of evolutionary development and of scientific investigation into the nature of the created world (Meyendorff 1974a: 134).

The Byzantines' hierarchical view of the universe provided not only a system of precedence, leading from God himself to the lowest created being, but also a sense of order (*taxis*). Heaven was normally pictured as the prototype of the imperial court on earth. The image of the enthroned Trinity contained in a manuscript held at the National Library of Vienna (Suppl. Gr. 52, fol. 1v) vividly portrays the heavenly court in accordance with prophetic visions described in the apocalyptic books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Revelation, among others (cf. Isaiah 6: 1–5; Daniel 7: 9–14; Revelation 4). God the Father, symbolically depicted as the Ancient of Days, sits with the Christ child on his lap, who in turn holds the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Around them, outside a rainbow-colored nimbus indicating their divine status, stand angels dressed in the regalia of the Byzantine court, holding knobbed staffs and other objects that reveal their various ranks in the hierarchy of officials (Hunger 1994: 97).

Pseudo-Dionysios, following the Neoplatonic idea that the celestial hierarchy represents a cyclical process of downward "procession" and upward "return," suggests that this order is characterized by motion (Luibhéid 1987: 145, n. 4). In other words, he argues that hierarchies serve not to maintain the status quo, but to lift human beings out of their limited, earthly state of being towards contemplation of

the divine world. Pseudo-Dionysios in fact provides in his *Celestial Hierarchy* the most comprehensive discussion of God's heavenly court and the hierarchy of angels to survive from the late antique or Byzantine periods. Although it is unlikely that the majority of Byzantines were familiar with his mystical writings (Mango 1980: 154), it is clear that these, along with the biblical and apocryphal texts already mentioned, informed both texts and art from the fifth or sixth centuries onwards.

According to Pseudo-Dionysios, there exist in heaven three groups, each of which contain three ranks of angelic beings: thus there are nine in all. The group that is closest to God in fact spends its time "beside the Godhead to whom [it] owes [its] being." This group includes the "thrones," as well as the cherubim and seraphim, "six-winged and many-eyed" (Lash 1999: 31), who are utterly pure and contemplative, endlessly praising God with the verse, "Holy, holy, holy …" (Isaiah 6: 3). Beneath this threefold group lie the "authorities, dominions and powers." Pseudo-Dionysios's definition of this group is much less precise; they are called "heavenly intelligences" and display more abstract qualities, such as freedom, courage, and harmonious order (Luibhéid 1987: 161–7). The lowest order of angelic beings includes the "godlike principalities," archangels, and angels. These are the supernatural beings that act as messengers between the divine and created worlds. They may assume the appearance of human beings in order to perform their missions, but are often described in texts as "the bodiless ones" and portrayed in icons as semi-transparent, humanoid beings (Peers 2001). Although biblical teaching on angels is not systematic, Byzantine theologians believed that they were created before the visible world and that their function is to reunite God with his creation, especially humankind. Angels were invoked in liturgical prayer, depicted in icons and other objects, and, especially in the case of the archangels, venerated as sources of divine aid and intercession.

Mary, the Theotokos, or "Bearer of God," was another, even more important, figure in the heavenly hierarchy. The Virgin's theological significance as the human link in Christ's incarnation was debated and eventually accepted in the early fifth century. From at least as early as the middle of the fourth century, she inspired devotion on the part of Orthodox Christians (Graef 1985; Vassilaki 2005). Because this entirely human, yet divinely pure, virgin contained in her womb the God who is uncontainable, Mary was ranked by the Church as second only to the Trinity itself. By the early fifth century, stories began to circulate that the body of the Theotokos had been taken up to heaven three days after her death (Shoemaker 2002). Thus, the Byzantines pictured her sitting in the heavenly court, although it was never determined precisely whether her body had been miraculously, and prematurely, reunited with her soul or whether she awaited the final Day for this occurrence along with the rest of humankind (*On the Dormition*: 28). The souls of saints who had achieved deification (*theosis*) in their earthly lifetimes also achieved a place in heaven or just outside. Sometimes they were pictured nestling in the "bosom of Abraham" or, alternatively, they were thought to have joined the heavenly court, singing praises around God's celestial throne.

As for the created world, it is likely that the majority of Byzantines adhered to the biblical explanation of its origin and physical nature (Mango 1980: 166). A literal

interpretation of Genesis, as we saw above, taught that God had created the world in six days. In spite of problems with respect to the order in which the elements were formed, for example in the fact that there was light before God had created the sun and the moon (Genesis 1: 3–19), early Christian theologians such as Theophilos of Antioch (second century) and Basil of Caesarea (fourth century) based their speculations firmly on this account. Kosmas Indikopleustes, an Alexandrian merchant who traveled widely in the sixth century and who wrote a geographical treatise called the *Christian Topography* (Wolska-Conus 1968–73), in fact attempted to visualize the structure of the universe on the basis of the Old Testament. Kosmas pictured creation in the form of a box, the prototype, as he believed, of the tabernacle of Moses. The earth, in the form of a rectangle, is the base of the box. It is surrounded on all sides by the unnavigable seas, beyond which lies a strip of land to which the walls of the universe are fastened. These walls curve inwards at the top, inclosing, above the visible heavens, the invisible one in which God himself dwells. We see in this account, as in those of earlier biblical exegetes, an interpretation that not only attempts to harmonize the geography of the known, inhabited world with the first chapter of Genesis, but also to demonstrate symbolically its position within God's created universe.

Whereas the physical universe could thus be described, even if imperfectly, on the basis of science, scripture, or experience, the underworld, known only to the dead or to visionaries, remained much more mysterious. Information may be gleaned mainly from apocryphal texts, dramatic homilies and hymns, miracle stories, and *Lives* of saints. For example, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, probably composed in the mid-third century and subsequently translated into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and other languages, recounts the apostle's vision of both paradise and hell, where he witnesses the torments of sinners and angels' intercessions before God on their behalf (Baun 2007; Elliott 1993: 616–44). Hagiography and miracle stories occasionally reinforce this picture, as for example in the account given by the seventh-century monastic writer, John Moschos, of sinners burning in fiery rivers of hell (*Spiritual Meadow*; Wortley 1992: 35). It is striking that in spite of such interest in the nature of heaven, the underworld, and the afterlife, the Byzantine Church generally avoided strict definitions of these topics in its official teachings except when, in later dealings with the Latins, these required elaboration in response to Western dogma concerning purgatory (Gill 1959).

Orthodox theologians attempted above all to convey in their teachings a positive, or non-dualist, view of creation. They taught that God would ultimately prevail both in his fallen world and in hell itself. This is most dramatically portrayed in the iconography of the scene of the Anastasis, when Christ descends to Hades, breaks down its gates, and draws out all repentant sinners, beginning with Adam and Eve (Kartsonis 1986). The universe, whether viewed scientifically or biblically, remains geocentric, with the earth as God's central focus of operation, and humanity as his crowning achievement. History represents the linear progression from the moment of creation to the Final Day of Judgement, when all will be completed and a new order initiated. What distinguished the Orthodox view of creation from that of dualists (and in a lesser sense from heresies that misinterpreted the full implications of Christ's Incarnation) was the belief that God remained manifest in this world through his Son, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. Creation was thus capable of transfiguration,

as Orthodox Christians could testify in their encounters with the sacraments, holy people, and special objects such as the cross, icons, and relics.

Humanity

God created humanity, according to Genesis, in his own image and likeness. This remarkable proposition, which lies at the roots of Judaeo-Christian anthropology, implies the enormous potential of all human beings. Maximos the Confessor writes that God communicated four divine qualities to humankind: being, eternity, goodness, and wisdom. Further, the Greek patristic tradition viewed human existence as being fulfilled by "participation" in God. Since everything good comes from God, or in a sense belongs to him, human beings can only reach their full potential when they relinquish self-will and allow themselves to develop in God's grace. According to Maximos, divine life is a gift, but it also requires effort: with the help of the Holy Spirit, human beings are called to grow in their relationship with God (Meyendorff 1974a: 138–9).

Humanity fell from grace, however, as a result of the disobedience of its ancestors, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. Byzantine theologians developed a somewhat different approach to the story of the Fall than that of their Western counterparts, who generally followed Augustine of Hippo's teachings on original sin. Whereas Eve had certainly disobeyed God's command in partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, this sin was not passed on as an inheritance to the rest of humanity. Instead, argued Maximos, this was a personal decision which implicated only the individual who had chosen to take it. The Fall from grace did, however, introduce changes not only for humankind, but for the whole of creation. Instead of "original sin," which according to Augustine and other Western theologians is connected with sexuality and transmitted automatically through procreation (Fitzgerald 1999: 607–14), Maximos and other Greek theologians regarded death and corruption as the natural consequence of the Fall. Sinful behavior occurs as a result of the urge for personal survival, but it always represents a personal act, enabled by God's gift of free will and motivated by "gnomic" or self determination, rather than the "natural" will that would normally guide individuals towards actions that are consistent with their divine inheritance (Louth 1996: 60–62). This is a subtle distinction, but it is nevertheless important. Following the teachings of the second-century theologian Irenaeus of Lyons, Byzantines tended to view the fallen condition of humanity, as well as of creation, as a training ground for spiritual progression rather than as a state of perdition from which only God can redeem us.

The Greek patristic view of women was theoretically egalitarian, but in practice often misogynist. This contradiction reflects in a sense the theological distinction between paradise and the created world. Gregory of Nyssa argued that there is no gender in God because of the eternal, unchanging nature of divine existence. By implication, and in accordance with Galatians 3: 28 ("there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"), gender distinctions, which were only established in anticipation of the

need for procreation in the fallen world, will be eradicated at the final resurrection, when human beings will be restored to this ideal state (Harrison 1990: 442). With respect to life in this world, however, it is clear that the Greek fathers saw women as inherently inferior to men and as more susceptible to temptation and sin. It was a commonplace to describe female saints as "becoming like men" by virtue of ascetic training and divine grace. Sometimes, as in the story of St Mary of Egypt, a woman may move from extreme depravity to a state of holiness exceeding even that of the diligent monk Zosimos (Mary of Egypt: Talbot 1996: 65–93). Women, inspired by the examples of the Mother of God and various female saints, could thus achieve positions of exceptional honor in the field of eremetical monasticism. This always reflected a reversal of Eve's original transgression, however, which, in spite of formal denials of inherited sin, did implicate women more than men in the thought of Byzantine theologians (Ruether 1974).

The human body, according to Paul, is "a temple of God" in which the Holy Spirit lives (I Corinthians 3: 16). This passage provided a basis for Orthodox Christian affirmation of the role played by the body, as well as the soul, in human salvation. Pauline theology provided some defence against dualist ideas concerning body and soul, which persistently surfaced in monastic circles throughout Byzantine history. Severe asceticism could result in real damage to the body, as many saints' *Lives* vividly attest. John Klimakos, in the seventh century, describes the state to which holy men's bodies could be reduced: "With knees like wood, with hair gone and cheeks wasted and scalded by many hot tears, with faces pale and worn, they were no different from corpses. Their breasts were livid from all the beatings, which had even made them spit blood. There was no rest for them in beds, no clean and laundered clothing. They were bedraggled, dirty and verminous" (Luibhéid and Russell 1982: 125).

At the same time, Klimakos and other monastic writers take pains to emphasize that ascetism does not reflect hatred of the body, but rather the recognition that it must be subdued in order to become a pure receptacle for the spirit. Klimakos acknowledges that asceticism is "hard, truly hard," but stresses that it is a necessary training for "those who aim to ascend to heaven *with the body* …" (Luibhéid and Russell 1982: 75). Asceticism is thus an attempt not to escape the confines of the body, but to train it and purify it to the point at which it may be transfigured. Hagiographical narratives stress in different ways the miraculous results of this process, whether these are witnessed in the fiery fingers of a desert father in prayer (Ward 1981: 103), the transfigured body of St Antony after twenty years in a deserted fort (White 1998: 18), or the corpse of St Daniel the Stylite that appeared "like an icon" to the assembled faithful (Dawes and Baynes 1977: 69). "Deification" (*theosis*), that is, the actual transfiguration of a saint's entire person during his or her lifetime, reflects the Orthodox understanding both of the salvific effect of Christ's Incarnation *in this world* and the ability of human beings, aided by the grace of God, to become like him through ascetic struggle.

Orthodox Byzantine theology therefore consistently stressed the ongoing relationship between God and his creation. While, as we have seen, the early fathers of the Church departed from pagan cosmology in positing a beginning of created existence, as opposed to accepting the Platonic idea of pre-existent matter, they did adapt

concepts such as the creative power of the Logos, or Christ, in the formation of the universe. The view that creation is good and that it possesses its own properties of existence, completely separate from God, are basic premises in this theology. Human beings, although created in the image and likeness of God, chose to disobey God's will at the time of the Fall; as the chief mediators between the divine and created worlds, they thereby involved the rest of creation in the consequences of that action, namely, the introduction of death and corruption into the universe. Christ, the second Adam, bridged the gap for the second and final time: coeternal with God in essence, he nevertheless "put on" human nature, thereby transfiguring the whole of creation and offering eternal life to humankind. Byzantine theological literature, including not only treatises, but also homilies, hymns, and hagiography, endlessly stresses this holistic, incarnational theology. Drawing on imagery which appears first in the Hebrew scriptures, especially the Psalms, Byzantine writers emphasized the involvement of the whole of creation in offering praise to God, as we see in a prayer by the seventh-century patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios, for the Great Blessing of the Waters at Ephiphany: "Today earth and sea share the joy of the world, and the world is filled with gladness …" (*Festal Menaion*: Mother Mary and Ware 1990: 355). At the same time, they remind their audiences of the transitory nature of life since matter is entirely dependent for its existence on God. The Trinitarian Godhead represents the main focus of Orthodox theology; as Maximos the Confessor put it, "God is the beginning, middle and the end of beings … for it is said, 'From him and through him and for him are all beings' (Romans 11: 36)" (Berthold 1985: 130).

Conclusions

The field of Byzantine Studies has traditionally suffered from a disjunction between theological and secular historical approaches. Scholars in the fields of Patristics and Church History tend to view Orthodox Christian theology as the most important legacy of Byzantium, whereas political and social historians have focused on the Church as an institution, embedded within the political structure of the empire, or as the source of popular religion and ideology. All of these fields are important, but sometimes awareness from one to another is lacking. Another problem, which nevertheless adds interest to the field, is the variety of approaches towards the history of spirituality. Whereas some scholars, following Gibbon, may view the cult of saints as a deviation from "pure" Christianity and as polytheistic (Mango 2002: 106), others stress their role as the most perfect examples of the Christian way of life (Louth 1981: 199–204). Scholars, especially in the era of post-modern theoretical methods, should be aware of their own, usually rationalist, biases when studying Byzantine society and faith. In spite of the huge *lacunae* in surviving source material, enough remains to enable us to understand at least something of the sophisticated theological system of the Byzantines. This was a tradition that engaged continuously not only with Christological doctrine, but also with developing cults of icons, the Theotokos, and saints.

An important question currently engaging historians is how doctrine and discipline were actually taught. We know that the majority of Byzantine citizens, even in the

later centuries of the empire, were illiterate (Browning 1978); this means that they received their religious instruction either orally or visually. The basic tenets of Christian faith were taught primarily in church: biblical readings, homilies, hymns, and icons all conveyed at least the narrative side of salvation history, as well as basic doctrine. It is unlikely, on the other hand, that the population as a whole would have encountered the theological treatises of Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite, Maximos, or John of Damascus. The existence of summaries of council proceedings, treatises, and other theological tracts suggests that simplified methods of instruction existed. Some texts, for example, collections of "questions and answers" or disputations, suggest that such instruction was conducted orally, either in church or in monasteries. Much work remains to be done in this field, especially since many texts belonging to these genres remain to be collected and studied (Munitiz 1988).

Another recent focus of study is the use of polemic, or adversarial, methods of communication, in Byzantine culture. The medieval Orthodox Church was consistently preoccupied with both defining its doctrine and condemning its ideological foes. These consisted of Christian "heresies" such as Monophysitism and Nestorianism, as well as separate religious faiths, including Manichaeans, Jews, and Muslims. It is still not known to what extent polemic reflects real political tension or alternatively, official attempts to impose conformity on the subject population (A. M. Cameron 1991; Elm et al. 2000). Judging by the extent to which an adversarial stance permeates every genre of Byzantine literature, it is likely that it also represents a didactic, rhetorical device (Cunningham 1999). In addition, an awareness that alternative belief systems and ideologies perpetually threatened the Orthodox Christian state served to bolster a sense of shared identity among the Byzantines. This sense of a consistent, divinely sanctioned, Christian world view may have helped the empire to survive for as long as it did, in spite of many difficult periods of political and military upheaval.

Throughout its long history, Byzantium remained a multi-ethnic, pluralist society in spite of the efforts of successive emperors and patriarchs to impose uniformity. It is unfortunate that, owing to limitations of space, it has only been possible to deal in this chapter with Orthodox, Chalcedonian theology and cosmology. The energy with which the official Church refuted "heretical" groups throughout the centuries attests to the vitality of their teachings. Much more work in this field would help to focus scholarly interest on the variety of religious and intellectual traditions that existed in the Eastern Roman Empire. While we may never fully understand the extent to which Byzantines lived, believed, and rationalized their faith, it is encouraging that scholars now fully recognize the importance of this field. Doctrine, liturgy, and spirituality represent essential keys for unlocking the meaning of texts, monuments, and artifacts throughout the Byzantine centuries.

FURTHER READING

Secondary studies: the history of Orthodox Christian doctrine is covered in numerous books and articles. Behr 2001 and 2004; Chadwick 1993; Kelly 1977; and Pelikan 1971 and 1974

provide introductions to the controversies in the early Church that led to the definition of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine in the seven ecumenical councils recognized by the Orthodox Church. Meyendorff 1974, organizing his material thematically rather chronologically, covers Byzantine theology and ecclesiology up to 1453. Beck 1959 remains the most comprehensive overview not only of ecclesiastical and theological topics, but also of the literary sources for the entire Byzantine period. Other useful surveys include Herrin 1987; Hussey 1986; Binns 2002; Cunningham 2002; and Ware 1993. Mango 1980 remains a thought-provoking and readable study of the Byzantine world view, including cosmology, supernatural beings, and the underworld. Alexander 1985 and Baun 2005 add depth to this picture, with detailed studies of individual apocalyptic texts.

Primary sources: most theological texts are published in Greek, with parallel Latin translations, in J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*. It is fortunate that better editions and modern translations, which are too numerous to list here, of Byzantine texts are appearing all the time. The Internet Medieval Sourcebook (www.fordham.edu/halsall/) contains a large collection of entire texts and extracts; the web-page also provides links to other sources such as the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers collection published at www.ccel.org/fathers2/. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash continually adds to his translations of Byzantine liturgical texts at www.anastasis.org.uk/. Many of the apocryphal or "unofficial" texts which deal with paradise and the underworld are treated translated in Elliott 1993. Saints' lives and collections of miracle stories are published in English translation in series published by Dumbarton Oaks, Cistercian Publications, Hellenic College, and others. The four-volume collection of the *Philokalia* (Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware 1979–95) provides an invaluable introduction to the writings of monastic theologians who lived between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries. As for Byzantine religious art, there exist numerous recent studies, including Cormack 1985; Corrigan 1992; Kartsonis 1986; Safran 1998, and many others.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Giving Gifts to God: Aspects of Patronage in Byzantine Art

Vassiliki Dimitropoulou

> Since it is impossible for human beings who still live and move in this world to show the ardor of their faith in you in a human way by more divine and immaterial offerings, imitating and copying the condescension and humility of the Word, I myself have built for you, the mother of the Word, a holy temple … Since you have gently tasted the faith of my heart, receive my offering with favor and do not thrust away my oblation, nor 'turn away your face from' your child but add a happy ending to an auspicious beginning. (Kecharitomene 23.82–7, 25.109–12, *BMFD* 665–6)

This extract from the monastic rule (*typikon*) of the monastery of the Theotokos Kecharitomene, founded by the empress Eirene Doukaina in the twelfth century in Constantinople, illustrates a well-known practice that took place throughout the history of Byzantium: monasteries, churches, mosaics, wall paintings, manuscripts, icons and other large-scale or small-scale objects were commissioned in order to be offered as gifts to God. Texts such as *typika*, wills, inscriptions, and epigrams constitute crucial sources of information about these acts of patronage. In addition, visual evidence about such offerings to God is provided by surviving donor portraits in monuments, manuscripts, and icons, whose donors are depicted as presenting sacred figures with a model of a church building, a manuscript or simply as kneeling in *proskynesis* before them.

In Byzantium, the majority of patronage had God as its point of reference. What today is perceived as "art" had a different role and place in Byzantine society, for it was a medium through which religious values and attitudes could be promoted (Cormack 1985: 10). "Religious patronage" would be a more accurate term to describe the activity of commissioning gifts to be offered to God. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the religious practice of gift giving, and I shall focus specifically on cases of monastic patronage. I shall use textual evidence coming from the monastic *typika* for what they can tell us about the ideas and concerns that may have encouraged individuals to undertake such activities.

The surviving evidence points towards specific patterns of patronage pursued throughout the Byzantine era. The cost, type, and size of the gift varied according to the resources of the donor; therefore, patronage reflected the way in which wealth was distributed. Most of the existing evidence indicates that it was wealthy individuals from the upper levels of society who could afford to be involved in patronage. The emperor, for instance, was in prime position to spend significant financial assets on commissioning buildings to be dedicated to God. Other prosperous individuals have also been identified as patrons: members of the military or civil aristocratic families; rich officials; civil servants; provincial landowners; and higher clergy. There are also examples involving less wealthy individuals from the lower ranks in the social hierarchy. Women and, more specifically, empresses and aristocratic ladies, notably widows, were significant patrons too, though their role in the production of religious art has been underestimated, and it is only recently that scholars have attempted to investigate the extent and character of female patronage in Byzantium. Essentially, it seems that anyone who could make a gift to God did so.

Yet on many occasions the patron's identity remains unknown. Despite this, within studies of Byzantine patronage, a lot of emphasis has been placed on identification even when no precise information about the patron's background survives. This fascination with who the patron really was is exemplified in the discussion about the emperor in *proskynesis* depicted in the lunette mosaic above the Imperial Door in the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Oikonomides 1976, Cormack 1981). Identity is seen by scholars as of significant value in the interpretation of the iconography of this mosaic, even if it enters the area of pure speculation (Cormack 1987: 620–1).

With both named and anonymous patrons, one key area of research is that of the motives that encouraged them to spend money on patronage. What both textual and archaeological evidence shows is that there was a considerable multiplicity of motives behind the acts, and that even though these actions have a religious character, wider socio-economico-political factors influencing the decision of individual patrons must also be taken into account.

The salvation of the founders' souls was clearly one highly significant motivating force for patronage, and what the donors explicitly stated they expected from the recipient of their gift. The metaphysical anxieties of the Byzantines were concentrated on the question of salvation and their inheritance of the eternal Kingdom of God. Perfection on earth was viewed as a prerequisite for the achievement of that goal. It was believed that only worthy and good souls would pass through the "toll gates" of heaven, and that the soul's progress would be aided if a divine figure could intercede on its behalf, if it could symbolically pay its way in the form of prayers and good deeds, and if examples of charitable actions and true repentance could be brought forward (Morris 1995: 128; Every 1976: 142–8). Founders addressed their invocation for help in their quest for salvation to major intercessors such as Christ, the Virgin, or saints, to whom their gifts were dedicated, hoping that, after their death, these heavenly beings would appear before God on their behalf. By founding a church, donors manifested to God their piety and love towards Him so that He would be better disposed towards the patron on the Day of Judgment (Morris 1995:

chapter 5; Galatariotou 1987: 91–5). In the eleventh-century rule of Michael Attaleiates for his almshouse in Rhaidestos and the monastery of Christ Panoiktirmon in Constantinople, the founder specifically referred to this day:

> I cry out with tears and a contrite soul, so that I may find the All-Merciful Master and Lord my God propitious 'in the day of judgment' to condone and forgive my countless sins. This is my cry of supplication … O Lord, may thy hand protect me and may thy mercy come upon me; give glory to thy holy name, and with thy power lead me toward thy divine tribunal; at the time of my judgment let not the hand of the prince of darkness seize me in order to drag my sinful self down to the depths of Hell, but stand beside me and be my saviour and protector. (*BMFD* 356)

Although the concept of purgatory is absent from Byzantine belief, sin was considered to be a moral disease that could be healed by divine mercy. The Byzantines thought that it was possible to redeem their souls in life and after death (Mango 1980: 164–5). In the eleventh-century *typikon* of the monastery of the Mother of God Petritzonitissa in Bačkovo, the founder Gregory Pakourianos regarded the process of preparation for eternal life as every believer's duty:

> It is profitable and the duty of every faithful Orthodox Christian who has been baptized into the holy and awful name of the revered Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, always to expect the end that is common to all, to take thought for the day of his death, to expect the resurrection of everyone and himself from the dead, and to meditate on that fearful and awful examination in the just judgment of Christ our God and Savior and the just requital for each of his deeds … it is our duty to take thought for these things with all our power while we go about in this life and to strive in every way to live wisely, to gain salvation from that fearful and 'eternal punishment' and the threat of 'hell fire'. (*BMFD* 522–3)

A constant theme that recurs time and again in the monastic *typika* is that founding a monastery constituted a kind of investment, by means of which donors hoped to buy off their sins in the future. The rule of Michael Attaleiates expressed this clearly:

> To thee therefore, O Lord, I make this offering, because it is through thy generosity that I have accumulated all [my property], so that it may be at the service of thy loving precept. For in thy kindness thou hast given to those who wish to be pious the manner of their salvation, by declaring that the wealth of each man can serve as a ransom for his soul. (*BMFD* 337)

Similarly, in the Petritzonitissa *typikon*, Gregory Pakourianos constantly referred to his many sins and wrongdoings, asking the Theotokos to accept his monastery as a form of ransom, ensuring that his crimes would be forgiven (Pakourianos 21.23–4, 41.367–86, 113.1559–62, 29.173–35.255, 101.1371–3).

The vocabulary used in the *typika* reveals that the foundation of a monastery amounted to a future investment for the sake of the founders' souls: Theodore Metochites' restoration of the monastery of Chora in the fourteenth century in

Constantinople was described in terms of "gain," "wealth," a "guarantee," and a "trust" for his soul (Ševčenko 1975: 54). Similar references to monastic patronage as ransom for one's sins appear in the *typikon* of the Theotokos Kosmosoteira monastery founded in the twelfth century in Thrace. The patron, Isaac the *Sevastokrator*, must have had a heavy conscience, for he repeatedly referred to his sins, which, he believed, his monastery would lighten:

> So, for some remission and pardon for my innumerable recurring sins … I restored this holy monastery of the Mother of God, with the help of God, not out of the profits of injustice (far be it from me, O God!) but at private expense, and in a fashion I believe not unpleasing to God. From its very foundations, then, I restored the said monastery, in a deserted area, formerly nothing but thickets, commonly called Bera, for the salvation of many … [lacuna in the text] and as atonement and ransom for my countless errors. (*BMFD* 799)

Patrons also believed in the efficacy of the prayers of monks and nuns as individuals who were able to lead a perfect life in Christ and to achieve a mystical experience of God unattainable within the limits of sinful secular life, and thus whose pleas carried further weight than that of mere mortals. The monks' prayers during the commemorative services were expected to expiate the founder's sins both during their life and posthumously (Galatariou 1987: 91–5). The *typika* contained detailed directions for prayers for the salvation of the soul of their founders and their beloved ones. The *typikon* of the monastery of Kecharitomene, for instance, prescribed that there must be two priests in the convent who were of proven virtue and piety, and who knew how to read the holy words of divine scripture, "so that the community may be helped towards the practice of virtue by their holy blessings and acceptable prayers and may raise a pleasing song 'to the ears of the Lord of hosts' and He, accepting their supplications on our behalf, will graciously forgive our sins on the Day of Judgment" (Kecharitomene 59.713–15, *BMFD* 678). Another *typikon*, that of the monastery of Christ Pantokrator founded in the twelfth century in Constantinople, expressed clearly similar wishes: "We bring thee these people as ambassadors to intercede for our sins; by them we attract thy favor and through them we plead for thy compassion" (Pantokrator 31.39–41, *BMFD* 738). The alleged power of the prayer is also indicated by the entreaty that the monks of Pantokrator had to make:

> Remember, Lord, our orthodox rulers and founders who are at rest and pardon for them every voluntary and involuntary sin committed by them in word or deed or thought and make them dwell in the places of light … [and] grant them thy kingdom and the favour of participating in indescribable and everlasting benefits and thine eternal and blessed life. (*BMFD* 739)

Patrons expressed not only their piety but also the crucial virtue of *philanthropia*, their care for mankind, in material terms (Constantelos 1968; Morris 1995: 128–9). Since the monastic communities were centers of hospitality, almsgiving and care for the sick, the poor, the orphans, the pilgrims, and the wayfarers, in establishing these the patron imitated the philanthropic God. The social services provided by monaster-

ies were considered instrumental in eliciting divine mercy. By founding a monastic house that could provide for the poor and the disadvantaged, patrons believed that they pleased God, who, in return, would favor and reward them by compensating them in paradise. The practice of *philanthropia*, in all its glory, is evident in the provision of social welfare through specialized institutions such as hospital, hospice, and old people's home by the Pantokrator complex. In the *typikon*, the sick are said to be, just like the poor, special friends of Christ, so their prayers were regarded as particularly efficacious (Pantokrator 29.32–31.41). Isaak Komnenos attached a hospital to the foundation of Kosmosoteira, making it clear in the *typikon* that he felt that the hospital would bring spiritual rewards (Kosmosoteira 20.1–3, 22.31–23.8, 50.16–18, 64.9–34, 75.18–26). Michael Attaleiates wanted to add to his almshouse in Rhaidestos a special pavilion for the reception of foreign pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, which is why he set aside special weekly allowances for their sustenance (Attaleiates 48–9).

A related reason that also led some patrons to found churches and monasteries was their wish to offer to God a token of their gratitude for the miraculous deliverance from danger, for instance, or for the many blessings that they enjoyed in life. Eirene Doukaina's *typikon* demonstrates her desire to express her gratitude for her successful office as an empress. Her foundation was a thanks-offering to the Mother of God, a gift to the Virgin (Kecharitomene 19–29). Likewise, in the *typikon* of the monastery of Pantokrator, John Komnenos thanked God for his successful military career (Pantokrator 27–29). In this context, patrons offered gifts to God in order to *return* a favor that He was believed to have already granted them, but also in order to ask for something *in return* in the future. In the latter case, the gift was regarded almost as a "ticket" bought in advance to receive the desired favor, even if the favor was not delivered until later. If so, Marlia Mundell Mango comments, then "such a practice directed towards the Almighty and his Saints in a sense paralleled the widespread contemporary bribery of state officials in order to obtain favours" (Mundell-Mango 1986: 5).

All of these motives place emphasis on the patrons' spiritual expectations or concerns, underscoring the essentially religious aspect of patronage. Without denying the significance of such motivation, it is also necessary to take into consideration the impact that these gifts had upon the Byzantine viewer, a consideration that leads us to a further set of concerns that could be designated as "socio-political."

Recent scholarship has been increasingly willing to put the viewer into the picture, and to ask questions about the effect of the religious monument on the viewer, and about the ways in which the latter perceived or interpreted it (Cormack 1987: 621–3). Such an analysis underlines two significant factors: the size; and the location of the religious foundation. Building was a large-scale activity, with highly visible products. The size of a foundation was the object of admiration, as primary sources reveal. The historian John Kinnamos, for instance, refers to the outstanding size of John II Komnenos's monastery of the Pantokrator in Constantinople (*Epitome*; tr. Brand, 17). The location of the building also constituted a public statement about the founders, and, by extension, reinforced their power over their people. Founding a conspicuous building made it visible to everybody, and this visibility resulted in the

enhancement of the visibility of its patron, even more so if the building was in the capital of the empire. Instead of referring the spectator to a past historical or political event, which is usually the case with monuments, religious buildings constituted public spaces that served to remind viewers not only of the ubiquity of God, and of one's duty to glorify Him, but also of the founders' piety, *philanthropia*, and public status. Size and location contributed to the public and political character of religious foundations, thereby enhancing the founder's prestige and social standing. These buildings served as ever-present public reminders of the patrons' offering to God. In this context, founding a monastery amounted to a statement about the patron's power and status addressed to the wider community. The frequent readings of the *typika* and especially the elaborate services carried out weekly for the founders' and their families' sake underlined this. Besides, the steps that founders took so that their monasteries would provide community services ensured that their foundations occupied an active and fully integrated position within Byzantine society, and this further contributed to a positive public image.

Founders of monasteries showed off not only their special relationship with God but also God's favor to them. In the God-dominated society of Byzantium, "any individual in making an offering to God was making a claim for his or her status in relation to God, an indication of accession to God" (James 2001: 157). The demonstration of this relationship generated power inasmuch as it promoted the patron's significance in society. Byzantine founders benefited greatly from their patronage activities since they gained a reputation for piety and holiness instrumental in enhancing their prestige and social standing. Such reputations constituted a form of symbolic capital, providing the patron with a great amount of credit. Michael Attaleiates, for example, was praised in the *chrysoboulon logon* of the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates for his foundation of the Panoiktirmon monastery (Lemerle 1977: 67–112). It was precisely on account of the social prestige that patrons gained that the emperor Manuel Komnenos in the twelfth century, following previous imperial policy, opposed the conventional practice of monastic patronage (Magdalino 1981: 64). In Choniates' text, one can see what was behind the foundation of monastic institutions:

> [Manuel] cast blame or heaped ridicule upon these men, not because they had granted a portion of their possessions to God in return for salvation, but because they had not performed their good works in the best way … seeking the praise of men [they] set up their whited sepulchres in full view of those entering the churches, and, even when dead, they desired to depict themselves as crowned in victory and with cheerful and bright countenances and built their holy monasteries in the market place and at the crossroads. (Choniates, *Hist.* 557b. Tr. from Magoulias 1984: 117–18)

Although there is an apparent tension between, on the one hand, the belief that patrons must have been in a powerful position before embarking on patronage activities, and, on the other, the contention that these very activities enhanced their prestige and power, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive but dialectically articulated. First, the foundation of monasteries indicates that patrons had the finan-

cial means to be involved in such expensive activities. This issue of wealth is crucial in this context, because a person with economic resources and the control of them was immediately in a stronger position than a person who depended on someone else. Second, undertaking projects of patronage contributed to the consolidation of the donors' visibility and social status. In this way, economic power generated ideological power by indicating how great and pious an individual was (James 2001: 159; Hill 1999: 178). Insofar as control over resources is one meaning and measure of power, patrons held it in differing degrees. Patronage both reflected and conferred status and prestige on the patron, attributes associated with power (Weingrod 1977: 43; Campbell 1964: 263–316).

This power was not all about the individual. Family considerations often played a pivotal role in the patrons' decision to undertake a founding project, and family concerns were a standard theme of monastic *typika*. According to the latter, founders felt the need to preserve their family bonds and so did whatever they could to protect and reinforce their family through special provisions. By founding a monastic house, patrons provided a refuge in times of need for themselves and their relatives. The monastery served as a symbol and focus of family unity and continuity. The *typikon* of Kecharitomene explicitly states that this convent was an intimate family affair (Kecharitomene 123.1821–23, 145.2240) through which Eirene catered for the emotional needs of her relatives, offering a home, a place for retirement to be used not only for religious comfort, but also in times of old age, misfortune, and political danger. She provided for members of the immediate family who may have wanted to join the monastery during their lifetime (Kecharitomene 37.299–39.358). If female relatives, as a result of their customarily luxurious way of life, were not able to face the full rigors of communal living, Eirene ensured that they would retain the privileges they enjoyed before entering monastic life (Kecharitomene 37.299–39.339, 137.2088–143.2226) by constructing luxurious buildings next to the convent for the use of her daughters and female descendants (Kecharitomene 136–43).

John II Komnenos also made special provisions for aristocratic entrants who may have brought some "benefit" to the monastery (Pantokrator 61.525–9 to 63.576). In a note at the end of the inventory of the Pantokrator *typikon*, a private residence for John near to the monastery is mentioned (Pantokrator 125.1577–9). Pakourianos too made special provisions for members of his family and of the wider social and ethnic group to which he belonged. He included the small circle of his blood relations, then the larger circle of persons of similarly high social status, and finally he encompassed his ethnic family of Iberians (Pakourianos 105.1418–107.1457, 29.142–3). Such public statements in *typika* and the implications for the monasteries served to underline dynasty, family, and lineage.

These foundations offered both a home in life and an eternal family residence after death. Many founders provided their churches with large extensions to accommodate family tombs. The common burial ground offered the possibility to maintain the bond not only among the dead but also between the dead and the living members of the family. The establishment of family tombs and the ceremonies undertaken by monks around those tombs served to consolidate the presence of the family and to

establish a framework of family loyalty within the monastery itself. It was perhaps the final stage of the localization of the family sentiment (Morris 1984: 123). The importance of support and togetherness between family members was underscored by the provisions made in *typika* for burial of the dead members of the family in the monastery cemetery. The desire of members of the same family to be buried together is illustrated in the Kecharitomene *typikon's* provisions for the burial of Eirene's children and descendants (Kecharitomene 131–133). This concern about lineage can also be seen in the family burial chapel included in the Pantokrator monastic complex (Pantokrator 73.728–33). In this funerary chapel, commemorative prayers were said for the immediate family, and also for distant relatives and trusted servants (Pantokrator 41–7, 81–3). Gregory Pakourianos made clear in his *typikon* that his monastic institution would serve as the burial place for himself and his brother Apasios. A common burial place to be shared by the founders and members of their families would remind everybody, viewers and relatives alike, of their lineage, family structure, and power.

Economic motives were intimately bound up with patrons' family concerns. With a view to providing for the financial needs of their relatives, founders put their money in trust for future generations. Similar to modern legal trusts for the preservation of the family fortune, monasteries were endowed with large amounts of property (Galatariotou 1991: 34). Their inventories reveal something about the founders' financial contribution to monastic complexes. Founders were aware of the fact that the huge amounts of money and property that they swept under the monastic habit would be by law inalienable and would enjoy tax and judicial immunities (Galatariotou 1991: 35). Financial stability for future generations was ensured by the appointment of an *ephoros,* who was a layperson, unsurprisingly a member of the family of the founder, and in whom the use and possession of the monastery was legally vested (Galatariotou 1987: 101). The *ephoros* undertook to supervise and administer the religious establishment. The *typika* stress that the office of *ephoros* would be passed on to members of the family. In the case of Kecharitomene, this was in perpetuity: Eirene ordered that the office was to be held by her direct female descendants, then her female in-laws, and finally other female relatives: "My majesty wishes her daughters and granddaughters and great-granddaughters and so on, as long as the female line continues, to oversee the convent of my Mother of God Kecharitomene, the one who is the eldest" (Kecharitomene 145. 2243–7, *BMFD* 709). Theodora Synadene acted similarly with respect to her convent of Theotokos Bebaia Elpis ("Good Hope") founded in the fourteenth century in Constantinople (Bebaia Elpis: 29.27–31.16). The *typika* of Gregory Pakourianos and Michael Attaleiates were also concerned that their families would continue to hold the land donated to the monastery. Attaleiates, more particularly, appointed his son as the *ephoros*, to be succeeded by one of his own descendants. Only if the entire family died out, with no descendant left to be *ephoros*, could an abbot be appointed without the intervention of the *ephoros* (Attaleiates 35.280–37.330, 39.361–41.404, 57.650–80). John II Komnenos chose his son Alexios to be the *ephoros* of the monastery of the Pantokrator, to be succeeded thereafter by the most senior member of the family (Pantokrator 127.1620–129.1627).

The patrons must have felt that, by tying the property to the monastery and by bestowing it through the *typikon,* they kept it in the family more effectively than by leaving it to their descendants outright.

Such provisions in monastic *typika* that place emphasis on kin and family members led Catia Galatariotou to see a distinction between "aristocratic" and "non-aristocratic" *typika*. Her contention was that aristocratic *typika* show a different spirit and outlook from non-aristocratic ones (Galatariotou 1987). Yet this differentiation is unsatisfactory and problematic because of the affinities between the two types of *typika*: both, for example, pay careful attention to estate management, and both are based on the same model, the *typikon* of the Evergetes monastery (Angold 1993: 56–7; Jordan 1994).

How far patronage was gendered is an important consideration. Women's patronage has often been underestimated and seen as concerned with lineage and a desire to promote their family rather than as having social and political aspects (McCash 1996). But because of the importance of religion in Byzantine society, religious patronage of men and women alike needs to be seen in the context of an active political dimension (James 2001: 149; Cormack 1985; Cormack 1986). Recent scholarship has considered the ways in which religious patronage relates to female power. Using Pauline Stafford's definition of power as the ability to act, to take part in events, to have a strategy and to pursue it, without necessarily succeeding, and to be in a position to influence others and to use one's labors for one's own prestige (Stafford 1997: 11; James 2001: 6) allows us to suggest that women's power and the spheres within which they have power may differ from men's. This challenges the traditional conceptualization of power as the ability to produce an effect or achieve a result, as wielding authority and influencing international affairs, as being in a position to carry out one's own will. An attempt, along the lines of Stafford's definition, to investigate the relation between religious patronage and female power in various periods of Byzantine history would be extremely important and needs to be developed further in future studies.

In conclusion, the great number of the products of religious patronage demonstrates that offering gifts to God was a common practice in Byzantium. The motives behind such gestures varied: considerations associated with the salvation of the soul and the forgiving of the patron's sins; posthumous commemoration; expressions of gratitude; family affection as well as visibility; social prestige; and claims on power. In Byzantium, there was no better way to spend money than by offering a present to God, for the benefits the founders believed they could gain from such activity belonged both to the heavenly and to the earthly order.

FURTHER READING

On patronage, see Gellner 1977; Cutler 1981; Mullett 1984 and 1990; Cormack 1989. Morris 1985 looks at motives for patronage, and her 1990 book is an important discussion of the place of monasteries in Byzantine society. Wharton 1981 looks at formulas for salvation; see

also Morris 1992. Byzantine monastic *typika* are collected and translated in BMFD. Congdon 1996 is a good study of the Pantokrator *typikon*; Galatariotou 1988 looks specifically at two women's monastic communities, and Koubena 1991 surveys them more widely. On families, Talbot 1990 and Thomas 1987. For a discussion of founding and refounding, see the papers in Mullett, forthcoming. For theorizings and discussions of female patronage, see McCash 1996; Brubaker 1997; Talbot 2001.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples: Goods, Gods and Guidelines

Jonathan Shepard

The Byzantine political establishment linked the empire's fortunes directly with adherence to religious "Orthodoxy," doctrine and worship deemed by church leaders and the emperor consistent with the Scriptures, the councils of the church and sound tradition (as they saw it). Byzantium's rulers claimed a special relationship between their empire and God's designs for the universe and the destiny of mankind (Dvornik 1966: II.611–22, 630–723; Dagron 2003). So long as their "God-protected" capital held out, the Christians would prevail, but the City's fall would presage the world's end and Christ's second coming (Alexander 1962; Magdalino 1993c). Constantinople encapsulated Byzantine hegemonial claims and manifest destiny, being termed "the reigning City," "the new Jerusalem," and "workshop of beauty," and in the last years of empire, when notions of "reigning" resonated less, a "holy city" (Miklosich and Müller 1860–62: II.361; Laurent and Darrouzès 1932–91: no. 3112; Fenster 1968: 29, 188).

The ingredients in this compound of immanent holiness and imperial hegemony were variegated, different valuations being placed by different interested parties, and with change over time. A list would include the residence in Constantinople's "holy palace" of emperors duly acclaimed by the army, senate, and people (Dagron 2003: 54–9, 78–83), and crowned by the patriarch; the patriarchate's own establishment there, adjoining Hagia Sophia, "the church of holy wisdom" whose very dedication implied divinely enlightened statesmanship; the constellation of other churches and monuments in the City; and stockpiles of holy relics, periodically reinforced, as when in 944, the *mandylion*, a cloth supposedly bearing the imprint of Christ's features, was ceremoniously brought "home" to Constantinople from Edessa, under imperial auspices (Theophanes Continuatus: 432; von Dobschütz 1899: 75; Kalavrezou 1997; Morris 2003). The City enjoyed the special protection of the Mother of God, whose garment was kept in the church at Blachernai (A. M. Cameron 1979a and 1979b), and according to Greek missionaries in Bulgaria in the 860s, the sole source of holy oil was in their land (*MGH Ep.*: VI.579).

If relics irradiated the entire City, manufactured objects could express the uniqueness of imperial authority. They were not merely symbols of excellence (Clark 1986: 9–11): their technical and aesthetic qualities gave proof of the rightful paramountcy of those responsible for their manufacture. The government therefore tried to monopolize production and distribution of items redolent of imperial authority, for example certain purple dyes and silks, and coin minting. Restrictions were already being imposed in the early Christian empire (*Theodosian Code* 1905: 10.20.12–18; 10.21.1–3; Shlosser 2005: 45–6). Justinian went further than any of his predecessors in arranging for silk's manufacture under imperial direction from silk-worms reared on Byzantine soil (Prokopios, *Wars*: 8.17.1–8; Muthesius 1995: 120–22, 318–21).

In the medieval era an overriding concern was to concentrate high-technology manufacture in the capital. Imperial workshops produced *de luxe* armor and the more specialized weaponry, as was already the case during the early empire (*Theodosian Code* 1905: 10.22.1–6; see also *ODB* 1991: II.774–5). And imperial craftsmanship was sometimes spelled out on the products themselves. The name of the main workshop at the former baths of Zeuxippos featured on certain highest-quality textiles of the tenth and early eleventh centuries; some also carried the reigning emperors' names (Muthesius 1995: 55–65). Quality-weave silks attested the emperor's technical prowess, expressed figuratively by eagles and other emblems (Cutler 2003). The connection between aesthetic excellence and empire was voiced by the customs officials who confiscated silks that Liutprand of Cremona wanted to take back to the West: "As we surpass other nations in wealth and wisdom, so we should excel in clothing;" unique virtues are conveyed "in the beauty of our clothing" (Liutprand, *Relatio*: 211). Whatever was actually said then, there is no doubt that administrative measures were in place to prevent "forbidden goods" falling into the hands of non-Romans (Liutprand, *Relatio*: 211; *Book of the Prefect*: 4.1, 4.8; 6.13, 8.1.3).

Rationing-out of manufactured goods and *objets d'art* was a stock-in-trade of Byzantine diplomacy, and for administration, too. Precious vestments, bejeweled necklaces, ivory plaques containing letters of appointment and other marks of distinction produced under imperial auspices were bestowed upon recipients of dignities, many being handed out by the emperors (Oikonomides 1972: 88–99; Daim 2001: 151–5; Koutrakou 2005: 260). Some notion of the rationale is given by the grading of silks according to foreign recipients' rank envisaged in the treatise on imperial military expeditions (Constantine VII, *Three Treatises*: 108–11; Morris 2003). Likewise the brief for the commander of an expedition to southern Italy in 935 specifies which vestments and crafted objects should be presented to which category of local notable (Constantine VII, *Book of Ceremonies*: I.661). The provenance of such items from the court (if not from imperial workshops) was highlighted: the gifts' containers would sometimes be adorned with images of Christ or the reigning emperor, together with inscriptions about them. Much of the emperor's manipulative capability stemmed from "demand-management:" gearing gifts to outsiders' approximate status in local society, and, most importantly, to their utility to Byzantium's needs at the time of presentation.

Imperial rationale as to what really motivated "barbarians" was hard headed, judging by Constantine VII's diplomatic handbook. His *De administrando imperio* notes the steppe-nomads' shameless importuning and the mutual competitiveness of

Armenian princes in seeking gifts and court-titles (*DAI*: 54–5, 192–5). Constantine also prescribes for the "outrageous demands" of more or less organized northern peoples, such as the Rus', Hungarians and Khazars, when they requested crowns, vestments, Greek Fire, and princesses (*DAI*: 66–7). They were to be fobbed off with "clever excuses," that these products of imperial workshops or the court were denied by heavenly command: physical disfigurement, fire from heaven, disgrace and a miserable fate had befallen emperors and officials flouting this command; by implication, outsiders involved in such transactions would also come unstuck (*DAI*: 70–71). On this reckoning, greed, fear and mutual competitiveness are the prime motivators of outsiders. Constantine presupposes "barbarians'" awareness of the power of the Christians' God, but insists that "Roman" ways and culture are beyond them: that the Bulgarians were Christians was no excuse for the marriage of their ruler to Maria Lekapena (*DAI*: 74–5).

The *Realpolitik* of Constantine's handbook contrasts with the tone struck in ceremonial and formal communications. There, gifts feature as extensions of the emperor's beneficence, deriving ultimately from God. Gift giving, like his other peaceful measures towards external potentates, was a function of the emperor's *philanthropia*, attuned to the divine order of the universe (Hunger 1963; Treitinger 1956; A. M. Cameron 1987). One might dismiss this representation as a kind of necessary nonsense, sustaining imperial dignity and self-belief through incessant rounds of subsidies, bribes, and tribute. And one could likewise accept the *De administrando*'s assumption that "barbarians" valued gifts primarily on materialistic or aesthetic grounds. By this interpretation, the gifts, ranging from minted coins to weaponry and insignia accompanying court dignities, were esteemed as status symbols, besides being of material value. But they lacked, in the eyes of those receiving them, transcendent qualities: the recipients did not incur meaningful obligations to the *basileus*, and the goods he bestowed were not deemed sacred. That so many external powers or individuals wanted to trade in Constantinople's markets might seem to support this interpretation. Judging by the extant regulations, the concerns of outsiders such as the Bulgarians, Rus' or Venetians were mundane—customs duties, security of ownership and material gain (*Book of the Prefect*: 9.6; *PVL*: 17–20, 24–5; Pozza and Ravegnani 1993: 21–4, 35–45, 51–6). And as recent research has emphasized, those beyond imperial borders who turned to the Byzantines for a religious cult mostly had their own agendas, personal or political. They were not, for the most part, responding to Byzantine urgings to convert. In fact the evangelistic impulse from Constantinople was more a matter of rhetoric than of sustained missionary endeavors (Shepard 2002; Ivanov 2003; Ivanov 2008).

There are, however, hints that an appetite for the Byzantines' goods might also entail bids for access to their gods or foremost God, if only to partake of benefits already showered upon them. Thus the Slavs living near, trading with and periodically harrying Thessalonike in the seventh century, sang the praises of St Demetrios, the city's wonder-working protector, after his instant repair of its earthquake-damaged walls (Lemerle 1979–81: I.195). Associations between luxury goods and divine powers may well have been encouraged by the Byzantines themselves. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, the Rus' negotiating a treaty with Byzantium were given vestments and gold, and were shown the "beauty of the churches," precious stones

and the relics of Christ's Passion, located in the Great Palace (*PVL*: 20). While this episode may have been set in the context of the first known treaty by the chronicler, it probably reflects actual treatment given to Rus' visitors—envoys or traders—in the tenth century, an intimation of the emperor's protectors and powers (Magdalino 2004; Flusin 2004 and other contributions to Durand and Flusin 2004). Small crosses laid in the graves of Rus' women and children, as well as the chamber-graves (emulating Christian coffins) of adult males in Middle Dnieper burial-grounds, were often accompanied by un-Christian symbols or rites, such as burnt offerings, outfits for the next world (including traders' portable scales), and beavers' ankle-bones. Some, at least, of the crosses were probably of Byzantine make. (Petrukhin 1995b: 216–33; Petrukhin and Pushkina 1998: 249–50; Mikhailov 2001; Shepard 2009a).

It is at this point that another discipline, anthropology, may offer keys to interpreting scrappy medieval data. There is evidence that exotica, especially well-crafted goods, are apt to be taken by members of self-consciously "backward" societies to denote extraordinary capabilities in their makers. Exceptional crafting is attributed to unseen spirits and powers, while possession of such artifacts brings prospects of direct access to supernatural powers and further benefits. This chain of thinking could prompt attempts by societies (or individuals now forming into groups) to institute cults and simulate or acquire sets of crafted, technically sophisticated goods, arraying them partly for their own sake, but also in hopes of attracting whatever lay behind the originals. The most celebrated example are the twentieth-century Melanesian cargo-cults. Locals seem to have drawn a connection between colonial Westerners' martial might, material plenty, and supernatural forces, and sought to tap into them through rites and apparatus.

The fullest presentation of possible leads between goods, gods, and guidelines is that of Mary Helms. Drawing on wide-ranging data from pre-industrial societies in Asia, Africa, and America, she categorizes many as "acquisitional:" their leading members, if not the entire population, aspire to the material assets and general well-being of some sort of an idealized place or polity elsewhere, a geographically separate, often remote, "center-out-there." These centers may interconnect with other sources of cultural origins and legitimization, which lie on a "vertical cosmological axis" leading to the world of spirits of ancestors and of celestial beings, "centers-up-there" (Helms 1993: 173–95, 206). Centers-out-there are locales "where ritual can bring the gods into contact with humans;" they tend to be places where skilled crafting is done (Helms 1993: 122–7, 157–9, 165–8, 194, 195). Skillfully crafted goods evince a capacity to transform, ultimately of other-worldly or ancestral origin and mediated through their makers on earth. They may be things of beauty, or of some practical use. What matters is that they are the work of skilled craftsmen, who "combine technical expertise and supernatural assistance" (Helms 1993: 195–6, 207; see also Bayly 1986: 304–9). Helms terms these locales "superordinate centers," which outsiders deem older than their "home" societies and endowed with an ideal or morally superior order.

Exquisitely crafted goods are themselves charged with extraordinary properties, and elites of acquisitional societies aspire to appropriate their immanent powers: "this … is why such items are so often sought or accepted as pieces of politico-ideological

regalia" (Helms 1993: 198). A superordinate center's leadership may act as representatives on earth for celestial powers, providing normative values besides gifts from its workshops. Tensions are inherent in the relationship between the elite of an acquisitional society and its superordinate center. Many acquisitional societies "tend to drift in and out of such associations;" a polity may try and "become a separate superordinate center in its own right" by developing "vertical" links with a center-up-there (Helms 1993: 206, 208). But where crafted objects, intimations of the world-order mandated from heaven, are manipulated by well-organized powers, outsiders are likely long to remain supplicants, notwithstanding attempts to break the mould. Helms cites imperial China as one such center: "Chinese-derived crafted goods" could serve as "regalia" for a potentate on the periphery; court vestments and other luxuries distinguished him from his notables, bringing "political legitimacy … by way of the Son of Heaven" (Helms 1993: 201–2, 196; Eberhard 1965: 138; Schafer 1963: 26–7, 156, 196–7; Liu 2001: 32–3).

What Helms says of imperial China's relationship with peripheral potentates and societies calls to mind Byzantium. Although himself no "Son of Heaven," and sometimes at odds with senior churchmen or monks, the *basileus* had in the Orthodox Church a largely cooperative partner. No embargo could be placed on the statements of doctrine, rituals, and discipline emanating from Byzantium or on translation-work into other languages beyond the borders. The ineradicably universal message of Christianity prevented emperors from reserving the cult for themselves as a kind of state monopoly. Yet the *basileus* presided over the manufacture of crafted goods much like the Chinese emperor, and exploited the resultant opportunities for manipulating the "barbarians." Not that the Byzantines themselves were strangers to the idea that certain substances were charged with supernatural powers. Thus precious stones were believed to possess extraordinary properties, and their installation in insignia (such as crowns) and thrones generated additional authority (Maguire 1997a: 1039; Koutrakou 2005: 256–66, 270–73. See also Greenfield 1988: 249–91). Moreover, items such as coins, crafted under imperial auspices, were apt to gain occult connotations and power in the eyes of the *basileus*' own subjects (Maguire 1997a: 1039–46).

Contradictory tendencies characterize the interaction between a superordinate center and acquisitional elites and societies: deference, appropriation, and emulation. Each case is different and volatile, "an overlapping of several essentially separate and distinct cosmological realms" (Helms 1993: 205). Disagreements over an acquisitional polity's appropriation of regalia, political tensions and even military conflict may occur, irrespective of territorial disputes (Helms 1993: 204–5). Gift giving and stipends were, as already noted, grist to the mill of Byzantine relations with all manner of external powers. Some were rivals, superordinate centers themselves, having well-established political cultures of their own. Those in the Christian West or Caucasia were not specifically obliged to Byzantium for their religion or church organization, while Islamic powers relied on a counterforce to prevail over what they saw as a superseded empire. Here, we can only glance at Byzantium's dealings with groupings or political structures to the non-Christian north. Most showed interest in Byzantine material culture, the goods.

To pinpoint the role of crafted objects in inducing individual notables or leaders to be baptized and, respectively, adopt or impose Christian observance is difficult. First, there is a problem of evidence. Those who settled for goods without more ado have left little by way of literary source-materials. This hinders evaluation of what they expected from the goods, the nature of the "charge" lodged in them. We are not much better placed in evaluating crafted goods' role in drawing political leaders towards baptism and whole-hearted Christian observance. Most early accounts of their conversions are painted in Orthodox tones. A presentation of the Christian progress of the people of Rus' is provided by the mid-eleventh metropolitan, Ilarion, himself Rus'-born. Vladimir and his grandmother Olga are portrayed as key figures, the former comparable with Constantine the Great, the latter with Constantine's mother, Helen: Vladimir learns of "the pious land of the Greeks," its churches, and "the powers, miracles, and signs working among them" (Ilarion, *Sermon*: 44, 48; Shepard 2009a: 186–7). There is no hint of those Rus' who adopted at least elements of the cult before Vladimir's time; nor is there word of the stimulus Greek-crafted goods might have given to the Rus' interest in their cult.

A second methodological difficulty in appraising northerners' responses to Byzantine-crafted goods is the diversity of their pre-existing beliefs, social-cultural lifestyles and agendas. If it was sometimes a matter of individual or familial preference, of personal faith or considered decision making, the forces behind the crafted goods were of weightiest interest to persons already exercising power over others, and looking to legitimize or extend it. Much depended on the structure of a society before its leaders actively engaged with Byzantine Christianity. Important as local circumstances were, we cannot investigate here the relative roles of goods, gods, and guidelines, case by case. But the evidence available for interaction between outsiders living to the north and northwest of Constantinople and the imperial-ecclesiastical complex based there fits quite well with Helms's scheme, forming a spectrum. At one extremity are the acquisitional polities adopting the "package" more or less wholesale. At the other are individuals or groupings that cherish goods, especially crafted goods, as status symbols, amulets, and sources of protection and well-being. Stray rites or cultic symbols might be adapted, fitted into pre-existing forms of worship. But the cults and religious devotions of the superordinate center are not adopted *en bloc* as a belief-system or, in Byzantine terms, religious Orthodoxy.

We shall consider three sectors of this spectrum. These are merely illustrated, without comprehensive coverage of the peoples northwards from Constantinople's environs to the Gulf of Finland and the Kama basin. Climate, terrain and degree of proximity to Constantinople played a part in determining placement on the spectrum, but were not all-important. This holds true for the Bulgars, who took not only crafted goods but also rites and, eventually, the One God and His guidelines from Byzantium.

The Bulgars' capacity for a politico-military organization headed by one member of a quasi-sacral family and reverence for the mighty sky-god Tengri are discernible from an early date (Iliev 2002; Stepanov 2005). The interaction between politico-military leadership and the crafted goods and divine forces of the *basileus* was under way while the Bulgars roamed the steppes. Various objects associated with the Bulgar

khan Kuvrat suggest as much. The monumental tomb excavated in Ukraine at Malaia Pereshchepina, almost certainly Kuvrat's, was stocked with *de luxe* Byzantine artifacts. Kuvrat had spent several years of his youth at court and was baptized there (John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*: 197). So it is not altogether surprising that Byzantium's products were thought necessary for the afterlife. Kuvrat's Christian observance seemingly relaxed after his departure and seizing of hegemonial power in the steppes. But he still held the court hierarchy in regard, judging by three gold finger-rings found in his tomb. One, designed for sealing, bore the legend in Greek "of Kuvrat *patrikios*" and, like another ring bearing the word "Kuvrat," it came from an imperial workshop (Werner 1984: 31–2, 44–5; Werner 1992; Iordanov 2001: 11–12, tabl. 1: 1–3; Zhdrakov 2005: 84–9). So, too, did the golden buckle and mount adorning a ceremonial belt, and 69 *solidi*. Silver tableware and at least one pair of arm-rings of Byzantine manufacture could also have been diplomatic gifts; likewise, perhaps, the golden harness trappings and saddle-ornaments (Werner 1984: 10–11, 15–25, 28–37). A silver paten formed part of Kuvrat's hoard, yet the ritual and goods (involving a horse-burial) did not accord with Orthodox teaching. They equipped Kuvrat with the accoutrements and authority-symbols befitting a victor who, some years earlier, had created a confederation of Turkic-speaking nomads north of the Black Sea. A third finger-ring's legend imitates that of the *patrikios*-ring, but was executed by a non-Byzantine craftsman. The lettering may have the character of runes, its shapes suggestive of bows and arrows symbolizing Kuvrat's sacral authority (Zhdrakov 2005: 90–3). Whatever the symbolism, the ring seems to have been manufactured in the steppes with the aim of supplementing the *patrikios*-ring. Symbols and ritual gestures characteristic of the Bulgars themselves, perhaps also of another empire, Persia, (Zhdrakov 2005: 92, 93–4) were grafted onto a signet-ring of recognizably Byzantine form.

Thus the leading Bulgar clans were well acquainted with Byzantine rites of rulership and worship before they crossed the Danube and began receiving tribute-payments from Constantine IV (r.668–85). Khan Tervel's military assistance was invaluable in helping Justinian II recover his throne in 705, and he rewarded Tervel with "many gifts" and a senior title. His receiving of acclamations and *proskynēsis* side by side with Justinian left an imprint on Constantinopolitan written records (e.g. Nikephoros, *Short History*: 102–5; Adler 1928: I.483), and on Bulgar historical memory, too. Among the aide-memoires for Tervel's subjects was a Byzantine-style seal portraying "Tervel Caesar," but with distinctive details: for example, a horseman attacking a prostrate foe was depicted on his shield (Zacos 1972–85: I.3, no. 2672; Beševliev 1992: 246–7; Iordanov 2001: 19). It was probably Tervel who reached an agreement with the emperor on trade between their respective dominions. This set limits on the value of the garments and scarlet leather the Bulgars could buy, stipulating that traders were to be issued with "certificates and seals" (Theophanes, *Chron.*: I.497; Shepard 1995: 232). Thus whether Byzantine goods reached the Bulgars through commercial exchanges or tribute, the khan and his agents acted as intermediaries. This state of affairs, making the Bulgar leader gatekeeper to the products of the Greeks, lasted for lengthy spells in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The occasionally confrontational, imitative yet deferential, stance of successive khans towards Byzantine rites and symbols makes sense. They, like Kuvrat, trusted

that their political structure would, if well ordered and worshipful, draw down supernatural forces already cultivated by the Greeks. Perhaps the most spectacular example of their eclectic approach in the first half of the ninth century comes in the form of two gold medallions of Omurtag. They portray him in Byzantine vestments, holding a cross-topped staff and wearing an imperial-style crown, also cross-topped. Omurtag's image resembles that on contemporary emperors' coins and the medallions, presumably intended for distribution to guests or retainers, invoke divine sanction. The legend reads "Kane sybigi Omurtag" (Beševliev 1992: 249; Maguire 1997a: 1039–42; Iordanov 2001: 25; Stepanov 2001: 6–7). The meaning of the first words is uncertain, but if, as is generally agreed, *Kane* stands for khan, *sybigi* probably refers to God or heaven, complementing the image's message: Omurtag's authority comes from "up-there" (Stepanov 2001: 7–10, 13; Maguire 1997: 1040–42). The concept was hardly new to the Bulgars, but the medallion laid claim to whatever divine force empowered the *basileus*. In fact, the title "prince from God," introduced into Omurtag's Greek inscriptions on stone, matched the legend "emperor from God" on contemporary Byzantine coins and seals (Shepard 1995: 238). The Bulgars' principal god was not identical to the Christians' God, but he could be accessed better via their rites, symbols, and appellations. Omurtag's successors likewise styled themselves rulers "from God." Judging by the inscriptions emanating from earlier ninth-century khans, specifically Byzantine rites of rulership such as acclamations were practiced at their courts (Beševliev 1992: 82–3, 215–26). The khan's relationship with leading subjects was couched in Greek terms and given new specificity. Thus "the fed man" (*ho threptos anthrōpos*) seems to have denoted persons with an honorable place at his banquets, while gift-giving features on some inscriptions (Beševliev 1992: 75–7, 224–40, 252; Stepanov 2001: 13–14). Bulgar court culture adapted Byzantine hierarchical ceremonies to create its own center.

The Bulgar leadership's bold approach to what the Byzantine center had to offer culminated with the reign of Symeon (893–927). The importance of the ruler's role in regulating the influx of Byzantine goods was still high, judging by reports that Symeon went to war over the location of the trading staple for Bulgaro-Byzantine commerce, and the emperor's failure to heed his initial protests (Theophanes Continuatus: 357–8; Shepard 1989 [1991]: 16). And apparently Symeon's own palace-complex at Preslav became a production-center for *de luxe* goods, including painted ceramics, glassware, and wall-tiles (Kostova 2004: 461–7). The most striking feature of Symeon's reign is his continuance of his father, Boris's, policy of inculcating Christian doctrine, worship and normative values into his subjects, "making orthodoxy unshakeable" (Iliev 1995: 99). Boris had finally opted for the Byzantines' way of worship, and an affiliation with the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, in 870. The *de facto* license he obtained to determine who should become the archbishop of his people's Church played a part in this decision (Shepard 1995: 243–4). So, too, did the array of writings on doctrine, liturgical practice, and monarchical governance available from the Byzantines, and a cross-section of these was translated into Slavic during the reign of his son (Nikolov 2006: 157–230). Symeon himself took close interest in the translation of selections from the sermons of John Chrysostom, and instructed his nobles in the "wisdom" of this world and the next (Thomson 1982; Thomson 1993: 51–3; Shepard 2003; Nikolov 2006: 171). Symeon's concern with

Christian governance took practical form, judging by Byzantine references to his reputation for "justice;" his own comparison of himself with the scriptural lawgiver, Moses (Nicholas I Mystikos *Letters*: 176–7; Shepard 1999: 572); and the possibility that a section of the *Ecloga* in Slavic translation was disseminated through his land (Maksimovich 2002).

Yet aspects of Symeon's reign illustrate the ties that could still bind an acquisitional power to an ancient center. These include the maintenance of Greek as the language of authority, shown on Symeon's inscriptions and seals and voiced in acclamations (Theophanes Continuatus: 407; Beševliev 1992: 182–5; Iordanov 2001: 40–52), and also, probably, of the liturgy, the centerpiece of religious worship involving the Eucharist, whereof Symeon partook daily (Nicholas I Mystikos, *Letters*: 86–7; Hannick 1993: 931–3). Symeon hesitated to appropriate wholesale the title and symbols of the *basileus*, judging by the way he was styled "prince," not "emperor," on earlier types of his seals, and forbore from self-representation in unmistakably imperial regalia (Iordanov 2001: 40–46; Penchev 2006: 85–6). When, in 913, Symeon took advantage of a weak regency and internal political disarray to march on Constantinople and negotiate from strength, heading an army, he neither demanded the throne nor attempted to force his way into the City. Having had himself proclaimed emperor shortly beforehand, in Bulgaria, Symeon's interest seems to have been in a coronation-ritual being performed by the patriarch, with acclamations by the Byzantine senate as well as his own army (Dujčev 1978: 274–5). Symeon probably knew of past inauguration-rites at the palace-complex where the ceremony was carried out, the Hebdomon (Chrysos 1975). What exactly passed between Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos and Symeon there is uncertain. Later Byzantine chroniclers claim that Nicholas crowned him with his own patriarchal *epirriptarion* "rather than a *stemma*" (Theophanes Continuatus: 385). That Symeon was so easily duped, or settled for less than an imperial crown, seems implausible, given the Bulgars' familiarity with Byzantine insignia; moreover, Symeon's seals depicted him as wearing a Byzantine-style imperial crown from, probably, around this time onwards (Shepard 1989 [1991]: 21–2; Iordanov 2001: 46–53. Compare with Georgiev 2001: 4–12; Nikolov 2006: 130–38). At any rate, the episode shows how seriously Symeon took Byzantine rituals of inauguration: reportedly, he even accepted Nicholas's denial of acclamations by the senate, as being the prerogative of "Roman" emperors (Dujčev 1978: 274–5). He had not, in other words, broken with Byzantium's interlinked rites of worship and political legitimization. Nor was he exempt from Byzantine spells, according to a chronicle. In 927, a statue in Constantinople allegedly representing Symeon was beheaded: at that very moment Symeon expired (Theophanes Continuatus: 411; Simeonova 2000: 106)! Symeon, so theologically minded, can hardly have been overawed by sympathetic magic peddled by Byzantine propaganda, but his subjects were probably as susceptible to notions about antique statuary and magic as the Byzantines themselves (Maguire 1995; Maguire 1997a: 1046–50; Simeonova 2000; Macrides 2002). Such apprehensions, together with his own sense that the City was "God-protected," may account for Symeon's protracted self-restraint before recourse to all-out warfare in the early 920s (Shepard 1999: 570–76).

If the Bulgars occupy one end of the spectrum of acquisitional societies, the opposite end comprises those who showed an appetite for Byzantine goods but did not take

things significantly further. The inhabitants of the Black Sea steppes exemplify those who dealt quite vigorously in such goods but without elaborating rites from them. Neither the steppes nor variants of the nomadic way of life precluded observance of certain Christian rites and symbols, as witness the paten in Kuvrat's grave. The Byzantines were prepared to assign bishops to peoples such as the "Huns" and the Onogouroi: they feature among the suffragans of the metropolitanate of Gotthia in the Crimea in the ninth century (Darrouzès 1981: 241–2). And from the mid-tenth century onwards, the Alans combined a semi-nomadic way of life with acceptance of Christianity. Their land constituted a church province under the authority of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. A complex of churches and monasteries was built at Nizhnyi Arkhyz, with elaborate frescoes decorating these and other churches' walls. Nizhnyi Arkhyz was probably the metropolitan's residence (Arzhantseva 2002: 19–22; Beletsky and Vinogradov 2005). By the eleventh century, Alania's princes had some sort of chancery at their disposal, high-quality seals with Greek inscriptions being struck for them; Alania could be described by Michael Psellos as well disposed towards the empire (Psellos, *Chron*. II.45: refs are to Renauld's edition; Seibt 2004: 57).

Yet the very abundance of data concerning the Alans perched on the northern Caucasus's approaches heightens the contrast between them and occupants of what the Rus' called the "wild field," reaching from the Dniester to the Lower Don. No large-scale Christian cult took root there, whether in Kuvrat's era, among the Hungarians in the ninth century, the Pechenegs who dominated the area between the late ninth and the mid-eleventh centuries, or their Uze and Cuman successors. This was not for want of appetite for crafted goods. On the contrary, the Hungarians are said to have exchanged slaves for "gold brocade, carpets and other wares of the Romans" at a Black Sea port (Ibn Rusta, *Orientalische Berichte*: 74–5). And the Pechenegs' martial prowess, together with Byzantium's desire to employ them against other northerners, put them in the imperial spotlight in the mid-tenth century. Constantine VII in his handbook recommended that parties of Pechenegs be ferried down to Constantinople each year to stay at court and "enjoy all imperial benefits and gifts" deemed "suitable" (*DAI*: 48–9). These Pechenegs were hostages, standing surety for agreements, but presumably personal friendships and lasting appreciation were nurtured, and gifts given.

Individual Byzantine coins, silks and bridle-ornaments of high technical quality do in fact occur in graves in the steppes attributable to Pecheneg notables of the tenth and earlier eleventh centuries. For example, two sets of silver bridle-ornaments were excavated near the Dnieper estuary. Their motifs and style resemble those on contemporary Byzantine artifacts and architectural decor, and it has been suggested that they were manufactured in a port on the Black Sea coast and bought by or for the owners (Kubyshev and Orlov 1982: 245–6). They could equally have reached the steppes as gifts, brought by diplomatic agents or accompanying their owners back from the imperial court. Comparable gifts, in the form of belts and garments, were a stock-in-trade of Byzantine diplomacy, and some, if not all, the elaborate belt-sets and mounts found in eighth-century Avar sites in the Carpathian basin may have arrived this way.

Archaeological data therefore suggests that the policy of courting the Pechenegs carried on much as Constantine VII had recommended, continuing through the

earlier eleventh century. Where contacts with the Pechenegs differed from those with, say, the tenth-century Hungarians was that they occurred at diverse social levels and venues. Constantine VII complains that emissaries from Cherson have to deal with Pecheneg escorts who are "ravenous … for articles rare among them," and demand recompense for wear and tear to their cattle and "gifts for their wives and their parents," as well as themselves (*DAI*: 54–5). Constantine also describes deals between agents and citizens of Cherson and individual Pechenegs, for what are rather coyly termed "services," as well as commercial exchanges. These Pechenegs receive "pieces of purple cloth, ribbons … gold brocade, pepper, scarlet leather, and other commodities which they require" (*DAI*: 52–3). Such goods, although crafted or processed in one way or another, do not quite match the horse-trappings, or the coins which the Hungarians in the Carpathian basin were receiving as gifts or subsidies from the emperor around this time (Kovács 1983: 148–9; Shepard 2004: 109, 114–17). Indigence, rather than "greed," probably lay behind most Pechenegs' demands: Pecheneg graves seem poor in metalware and ornaments, in comparison with those of the nomads who moved into the Black Sea steppes in the eleventh century (Pletneva 1958: 153–61, 224).

One might expect some Pecheneg guests at the emperor's court to have taken back to the steppe sacred vessels, if not strict Christian observances, in the footsteps of Kuvrat. Yet this does not seem to have happened on any significant scale. It was only when a Pecheneg chieftain named Kegen sought Byzantine protection and was provided with pasturelands and forts on the Lower Danube around 1043 that he and his followers were baptized: a monk sent by the emperor did the deed (John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*: 456–7; Stephenson 2000: 89–90). Nomads—"wagon-dwellers"—feature in court orations and other Byzantine literature as quintessential pagans, and Prince Vladimir, from his biased yet empirical perspective, was sceptical about missions to the Pechenegs (Bruno of Querfurt 1973: 98–9; Ivanov 2003; Ivanov 2008). Heavily dependent on their animals' well-being and seasonal pasturing, nomads did not, on the whole, take to heart a cult presupposing fixed sanctuaries and the rhythms of agriculture and urban life (Khazanov 1994: 44–52; Ivanov 2007; Ivanov 2008). The Pechenegs and Uzes seemingly lacked regular winter encampments or, even, burial-grounds (Pletneva 1981: 218, 221). They had chieftains with notions of status symbols, but for them, Byzantine crafting-skills were mostly applied to familiar objects of universal value on the steppes, for example, caparisoning their steeds. And for the Pechenegs and most other nomads frequenting the Black Sea steppes, the sheer multiplicity of channels for doing deals with the Greeks made it harder for any leader or grouping to emerge as regulator of the influx of goods, or as principal dispenser. There were no Pecheneg counterparts to the "certificates and seals" issued by the Bulgar khan in the Balkans.

If the Bulgars and the pastoral nomads mark extremes on our spectrum, the Rus' belong somewhere in between, as a society, or nexus of societies, that acquired goods and then gods from Byzantium, but remained highly selective as to which guidelines to appropriate. That the Rus' have a place of their own is no surprise, since their geo-political experience was, literally, far removed from that of nomads on the Eurasian steppes or from ex-nomads who imposed their dominion over the Balkans. Based

far away, the Nordic Rus' elite straddled populations and territories lying beyond the fringe of classical antiquity, and its stereotypes of Scythian steppe-nomads. The Rus' were drawn to the Middle Dnieper region by prospects of selling slaves and furs to the Greeks, and the hazards of this enterprise stimulated development of a fairly tight politico-military organization. By the mid-tenth century, Rus' traders and others sailing to Byzantium were equipped with certificates from the Rus' leadership, stating how many ships had been sent south (*PVL*: 24). This recalls the arrangement made with the Bulgars not long after their installation on the Danube, but in important respects the Rus' structure differed from that of the Bulgars. The Rus' on the Dnieper functioned as a kind of cooperative, setting less store by monarchy. The paramount prince might issue the sailing permits and sport the title of "khagan," derived from the sacral head of the Khazars, the semi-nomadic power based on the Lower Volga. But other princes and nobles were important enough to send named representatives to negotiate a treaty with the Byzantines in 944, side by side with Prince Igor's (*PVL*: 23). Some emissaries, if not their employers, were Christians, swearing to uphold the treaty in a palace chapel, while others swore by the Slavs' god Perun (*PVL*: 24, 26). Cult, paramount ruler, and political order were not so closely interwoven among the Rus' as with the Bulgars.

The sprawling Rus' dominions were held together partly by force, but a widespread desire for individual or familial self-enrichment through orderly trading provided a measure of common interest, even consensus. Those obliged to render tribute in furs could also engage in bartering for Islamic silver, beads, or other crafted goods, while the Slav tributaries providing craft to be rigged out for the Byzantine run sold them to their Rus' overlords (*DAI*: 58–9; Franklin and Shepard 1996: 119). Islamic silver remained the principal driver of exchanges among the Rus' until the mid-tenth century, and after the supply of silver coins from the East faltered, the main alternative source lay in the West, in the form of German and Anglo-Saxon coins: little silver came from Byzantium, which was far from being the sole provider of crafted goods to the Rus'. And for all the attractions of the silks and other products of the Greeks, the comforts and cults displayed to visitors in Constantinople, not all leading Rus' were enchanted. Olga's own son, Sviatoslav, is said to have rebuffed her efforts to convert him, and the peace-treaty he later made with John I Tzimiskes in 971 was sworn by "God … , Perun, and Volos, god of cattle" (*PVL*: 34). Potent as Byzantium's magnetism was, it did not displace other gods and goddesses. Among the mounts excavated at the great emporium near Smolensk is one depicting a Valkyrie. Hammerlets of Thor occur fairly frequently at this and other trading-centers, and elements of Nordic and Khazar rites and legends are discernible in the massive barrow of a magnate excavated near Chernigov (Petrukhin 1995a; Mikhailov 2001; Duczko 2004: 127–37, 161–70, 239–41). The land of Rus' could probably long have accommodated a plethora of cults and cultural affinities, as Khazaria managed for hundreds of years.

It took a ruthless, initially rootless, leader to attach the Greeks' God firmly to his regime. Vladimir's decision to adopt Byzantine Christianity occurred some ten years after seizing Kiev, and only after weighing up alternative creeds. What tipped the balance was a coincidence: of Basil II's predicament, virtually besieged in

Constantinople by his own armed forces, with Vladimir's overweening striking-power, shown in his capture of Cherson, and his dispatch of an army to relieve Basil in c.988. This intervention probably saved Basil his throne. Vladimir's reward was Basil's sister, Anna, for a bride, a union conditional upon his baptism. Anna was accompanied to Rus' by "metropolitans and bishops" and, according to Yahya of Antioch, they "baptized the king and all the people and his country" (Yahya of Antioch, *Histoire*: II.432). Vladimir highlighted his ties with the emperor by taking "Basil" for his Christian name. Boris of Bulgaria had likewise adopted the name of the emperor reigning at the time of his baptism, Michael.

Acceptance of the God of the Greeks earned Vladimir, too, access to their craftsmanship, which he used to amplify his authority: gold and silver coins showing Christ Ruler of All, and on the other side Vladimir wearing a Byzantine-style crown, were struck soon after his baptism. Their message of God-given wealth would have been obvious to those, mainly retainers or nobles, who received the coins. Coin striking was just one of the ways in which adoption of Christianity set Vladimir apart from others in the Rus' elite, associating him with the "Ruler-up-there." There had been little building in brick and worked stone in Rus'. Now Vladimir could express his power in these materials. "Masters" were summoned from Byzantium, and their first project was a show-church, in the new palace-complex in Kiev. The church was dedicated to the Mother of God and decorated with mosaics and wall-paintings, as were the princely halls flanking it. Feasts held every Sunday in the palace-complex for a broad cross-section of the elite may represent an attempt to match the rhythms of banqueting in the emperor's halls. Vladimir's church had the same dedicatee as the main palace-church in Constantinople, the Pharos, and its layout and design seem to have been similar (see Komech 1987: 168–76; Noonan 1988; Putsko 1991; Franklin and Shepard 1996: 164–8, 171–2). By the mid-eleventh century, Ilarion could acclaim the Mother of God as protectress of Kiev (Ilarion, *Sermon*: 50), and the notion of the city as a sacral center under her care probably dates from Vladimir's time. Besides installing relics of St Clement in his church, Vladimir set up statues and horses of bronze outside, spoils from the sack of Cherson. These trophies displayed the craftsmanship now at his disposal, with intimations of extraordinary powers: hence, perhaps, the *Primary Chronicle*'s term for the statues, "idols" (*PVL*: 53).

Vladimir's acquisitions from the Greeks did not stop at goods and shrines. He showed concern that his people should follow their ritual and doctrinal guidelines, and bishops were installed in key towns, including Novgorod and, just southwest of Kiev, Belgorod. To a German visitor in 1008, the Rus' appeared a Christian people and Vladimir a dreamer of heaven-sent dreams (Bruno of Querfurt, *Epistola*: 99). Vladimir, like his son and eventual successor Iaroslav, is credited with a "church statute," listing types of misdeed that should come under ecclesiastical jurisdiction. These "statutes" probably date from well after Vladimir's time, but there is no reason to doubt that church discipline was maintained in line with Byzantine canon law, and a Slavic version of the *Nomocanon of Fourteen Titles* became available in Rus' (Franklin and Shepard 1996: 230–36; Franklin 2002: 136–8, 148–52). A version of the *typikon* of the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople was translated for the benefit of the Rus' (Franklin 2002: 137, 144–5), and Ilarion's *Sermon on law and grace* displays

the erudition, eloquence and theological sophistication attainable by top members of the native-born clerical elite.

Ilarion, in his *Sermon*, acclaims the ruler of Rus', Iaroslav, as God's choice of successor to Vladimir, a Solomon to his father's David, and describes his building-projects (Ilarion, *Sermon*: 80). The privileged access to the saints of Iaroslav and his wife was set in stone, in the form of two monumental churches in Kiev dedicated to their respective patron saints, George and Irene. And, suggestively, Iaroslav, Irene and their children were depicted in the company of Christ, on the walls of Iaroslav's new church of St Sophia. This formed the centerpiece of the newly extended capital, and its numerous domes simulated the church of St Sophia built by Justinian. Likewise, Kiev's Golden Gate was reminiscent of Constantinople's, which, as Iaroslav and his advisors presumably knew, itself had a parallel in the Golden Gate of Jerusalem (Poppe 1981: 38–50; Brumfield 1993: 11–14; Franklin and Shepard 1996: 209–14). At one level, St Sophia, built and decorated by Byzantine craftsmen, together with the Golden Gate on the south side of the city, constitute an icon of Constantinople, partaking of its spiritual properties. On another plane, the layout and décor of Kiev, described by a German churchman as "rivalling Constantinople's sceptre" (Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*: 254), call to mind the cargo-cult, landing-strips for the gods. The Rus' rulers' measures to create a locus of legitimate authority and sacrality on the Middle Dnieper certainly accord with Helms's thesis of an acquisitional polity's relationship with a superordinate center.

In adopting the Byzantines' guidelines on matters of worship, the Rus' could be called thoroughly Orthodox. The guidelines did not, however, reach far or deep. In contrast to Symeon and other Christian Bulgarian rulers, Vladimir and his successors did not make justice a prominent attribute of rulership or disseminate Byzantine law-codes. A text compiled under princely auspices in the mid-eleventh century sets out tenets and procedures for dispute settlement. But the "Short *Pravda*" lacks notions of punishment, of Christian values. It consists mainly of practical provisions, rates of compensation varying according to the status of offender and offended, with harsh retribution for injuries to princely agents, or damage to princely possessions (*Laws*: 14–19; Franklin 2002: 156–8). The text was subsequently amplified, but dispute-settlement remained largely bilateral, a matter of parleying and recompense, even in the urban networks along the riverways where princely authority was palpable. In communities outside the conurbations, the imprint of the prince's agents was fainter, confined to tribute-collection. The imposition of Christianity was correspondingly fitful.

While religious Orthodox guidelines may have been lacking in the rural communities of Rus', cult-objects and goods from the Christian world were not. The distinctive settlement-pattern of the northern forest zones of Rus' has much to do with this. Between the tenth and the twelfth centuries their populations seem to have congregated near lakes and rivers in fairly compact clusters, even the smaller settlements being involved to some degree with the fur-trade. The nexuses straddled immense, virtually empty, tracts of wilderness, and remote communities in the farthest north could hope to profit through harvesting the highest-quality furs. The furs, together with other primary produce, were bartered for exotica, semi-precious metals and

crafted goods (Makarov et al. 2001: 64–8, 78–92, 217–23). Among these goods were Christian symbols, especially small metal crosses for wearing round the neck. The crosses occur in burial-grounds across the lands north of Novgorod and the region of the White Lake, but in only a smallish proportion of the total of graves (Musin 2002: 178–84, 197–9; Makarov 2004: 258–65). However, excavations of twelfth- to early thirteenth-century-occupation strata in villages near Lake Kubenskoe in northeast Rus' have yielded far more finds of crosses and other Christian symbols than the burial-grounds' data would lead one to expect. Many, if not most, villagers seem to have worn a cross-pendant in daily life, implying widespread veneration of the Christian cross as a personal talisman (Makarov 2004: 265). Churchmen were thin on the ground: individual priests accompanied tribute-collectors such as Ian Vyshatich, perhaps performing mass-baptisms, the liturgy and commemoration of the dead. This left villagers free to harbor diverse beliefs and venerate a host of spirits, in a world still working by magic (Ryan 1999). Yet a relaxed approach to guidelines did not amount to premeditated deviation. In fact cross-wearers, and those depositing icons and other valuables in the graves of loved ones, probably considered themselves true to Christ and His Cross. Whether this made them "Orthodox" or not in the term's religious sense is debatable (Musin 2002: 67–71, 199; Makarov 2004: 269–72). But the crosses, manufactured in Rus', yet following designs current in Byzantium and the Baltic world, are a further illustration of artifacts inspired ultimately by the Byzantine world and supposedly charged with extraordinary powers.

In the immense land of Rus', cults and guidelines could not be imposed from above on the entire population; normative values and religious devotions were largely a matter for grass-roots. Yet there was a certain convergence between this popular piety and the Orthodox precepts and claims to divinely sanctioned authority of the princely elite and the organized church in Rus'. It has been noted that rural burial-rituals, although involving barrows unknown to Byzantine Orthodox practice, followed certain patterns (Makarov 2004: 271–2), and the cult and iconography of, for example, warrior-saints did not radically diverge from Byzantine Orthodoxy, even after gaining adherents below elite-level in Rus' (White 2004). This amalgam was idiosyncratic, and volatile. But it fits well enough in the middle reaches of our spectrum of responses of acquisitional societies to the goods, gods, and guidelines show-cased so convincingly in the City "out-there" on the Bosporus.

FURTHER READING

The interplay between Byzantium and other societies, non-Christian and Christianizing, is lucidly presented in the classic study of Obolensky 1971. For conceptions of center and periphery see Shils 1975 and, more specifically, Stepanov 1998; and for the Byzantines' ritualization of their centrality, see A. M. Cameron 1987 and contributions to Maguire 1997b. On theorizing gods and goods, see Helms 1993. Some dismiss "cargo cults" as essentially a construct of Western discourses about the cultural "self" and "other," and the label has been used loosely for variant practices observed in disparate societies. But undeniably efforts were made in societies in Melanesia and Papua New Guinea to copy Western goods, installations,

and the secret rituals supposedly responsible for them. This could extend beyond building airstrips and hopes of the sudden appearance of a city the size of New York to adopting certain Christian rites and observances, or full conversion. For classic accounts of cargo-cults, see Lawrence 1964; Lawrence and Meggitt 1965; Worsley 1968. For critiques and rejoinders, see Trompf 1990: 64–75; Lindstrom 1993; contributions to Jebens 2004; Jebens 2005: 209–19. In defence of applying anthropologists' findings in specific societies to medieval contexts, see Rosenwein 2003 and also Curta 2006.

For Byzantine gifts to outsiders, see Hamidullah 1960; Cormack 1992; Lowden 1992a; Grabar 1997; Soucek 1997; Kresten 1998; Cutler 2001; Koutrakou 2005; Prinzing 2005; Tinnefeld 2005; Drocourt 2006. More specifically, for appreciation of Byzantine craftsmanship in an Abbasid context, see El-Cheikh 2004: 54–60, and for the adoption of imperial rites and symbols of authority in Georgia see Eastmond and Jones 2001 and Eastmond 1998. In the Christian West, Byzantine devices such as organs excited Frankish aspirants to monarchy (Tinnefeld 2005: 122); and the empire's established reputation seemingly enabled it to subsume such techniques as cloisonné enamels from the West within its own mystique (Buckton 1988; Buckton 1995; Brubaker 1997a).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Christology and Heresy

Andrew Louth

The notion of faith is central to Christianity; from the very beginning the process of becoming a Christianity involved a profession of faith, sealed by baptism. The earliest professions of Christianity specify such a profession as faith in Jesus Christ, that is to say faith that Jesus, the central figure of the Gospels, who was crucified and rose from the dead, is the Christ, the Messiah, the looked-for fulfillment of the hopes of Israel. In Gentile (i.e., non-Jewish) circles, this profession of faith took the form of a confession that Jesus is the "Son of God," or the "Lord," *ho Kyrios*, the term used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible to represent the name of God. In this way the notion of faith in God, as trust in God (or the gods) common to most forms of religion, came in Christianity to involve something more specific, namely a correctly (or adequately) defined understanding of the relation of Jesus to God, a relationship that, in some way, included Jesus in the reality of God. In the pagan world, this posed no problem: Jesus could simply be added to the pantheon of the gods, which is presumably what Pliny thought the Christians believed who, he reported, gathered early in the morning "to sing a song to Christ as God." Within the circles of Jewish monotheism, where Christianity first emerged, any attempt to associate another being with God was regarded as virtual apostasy. Ways of associating Jesus with God that did not infringe the oneness of God were devised (or adopted): regarding Jesus as God's mediator in creation, the one "through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (2 Cor 8:6, cf. Col 1: 15–17), which could also be expressed as identifying Jesus with God's Wisdom, his partner in creation (cf. Prov 8:22), or with God's Word or *Logos* (notably John 1:1–18; cf. Wisd. 18:14–15).

The need to define, adequately or correctly, lies behind the two topics discussed here: Christology, which is concerned with correctly defining Christ (or Jesus) in relation to God, and heresy, the term used by Christians to refer to erroneous or inadequate ways of expressing Christian faith. The term "heresy" (in Greek: *hairesis*) originally meant a choice, and already in Hellenistic Greek had been used to refer to the various philosophical schools, or by Josephus to designate the different schools

of Judaism (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes), but by the second century Christian writers such as Hegesippos used it to refer to a wrong or wilful "choice," that is, an interpretation contrary to the interpretation of the Faith current in the Great (or Catholic) Church. The second century saw a host of competing ways of interpreting the Christian message: one central issue concerned the continued validity of faith of Israel as expressed in the Hebrew Bible, given the Apostle Paul's emphasis on the newness of the Christian Faith, another concerned the extent to which Christianity could be expressed using the concepts, either philosophical or religious, of the classical Greek tradition. The versions of Christianity that competed with the faith of the Great Church are generally (though not altogether helpfully) designated as "gnosticism" by comparatively recent scholarship, though it is very likely that in many parts of the early Christian world it must have been very difficult to know what was "catholic" and what was not. Characteristic of many of these alternatives to Catholic Christianity was a rejection of the Hebrew Bible, regarding it as the revelation of a creator God, whose creation is bungled or even positively evil, and thus developing a dualistic understanding of the world, positing an ultimate conflict between goodness (associated with the true God revealed by Christ) and evil (characteristic of the world and traditional forms of society). In rejecting gnosticism, the Church articulated its conviction that everything is created from nothing by God, and is consequently good. The use of ideas from classical philosophy and religion was also rejected by the Great Church, at least explicitly, though in fact the most important defenders of Catholic Christianity (both against gnosticism and also against the suspicions and fears of the majority population of the Roman Empire and the governing class) made use of philosophical ideas, and especially those embraced by the dominant school of Platonism. As an identifiable form of Catholic Christianity began to emerge at the end of the second and beginning of the third century, we begin to find attempts to map the multifarious forms of heresy, notably that of the Roman writer Hippolytus, who is probably typical of a genre mostly now lost in modeling the variety of heresy on different schools (or "heresies") of Classical and Hellenistic philosophy.

The history of Christology and heresy took a decisive turn at the beginning of the Byzantine period, with the conversion of Constantine, and his desire to promote (and therefore define) Catholic Christianity. By the time of Theodosios the Great (r.379–95), who sought to make Catholic Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christology had become a matter of imperial policy, defined by imperial or ecumenical synods or councils. *Synodos*, or, in its Latin form *synodus*, was the preferred Christian form for these assemblies, as Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, while the adjective "ecumenical," derived from the Greek *oikoumene*, meaning the inhabited world, was Roman terminology for what concerned the whole empire, the whole civilized world, as they vauntingly thought of it. Any dissent from Orthodox or Catholic Christianity (whether heresy or paganism) disqualified one from the rights of citizenship, an exception being made for the Jews, who were allowed to continue, with state protection, as standing witnesses to the truth of the Gospel they had rejected. Christian heresy, for the next few centuries, mostly took the form of Christological theories rejected by the conciliar tradition. However, the fourth century saw the powerful propagation within the Byzantine empire of what can almost be regarded

as a distillation of the multifarious gnostic heresies of the second century, namely Manichaeism. Named after the prophet Mani, an enthusiastic preacher of a form of cosmic dualism ("good" versus "evil") with gnostic roots, who flourished in Persia in the third century and was martyred in 276, Manichaeism was a highly organized missionary religion that became very popular in the fourth and fifth centuries, until it was virtually extinguished in the Byzantine empire by persecution under Justinian. Manichaeism was regarded as a fundamentally dualist heresy, but almost as often characterized by Christian opponents as embracing a docetic Christology, that is, the belief that Christ only appeared (in Greek, *dokein*) to be human. This may be significant, for, as we shall see, there was a tendency in the period of the ecumenical councils to regard all serious forms of heresy as Christological.

Symbolic of the turning-point in the history of Christology and heresy brought about by the conversion of Constantine was the council that he called in 325 at Nicaea, the first ecumenical council (though only called that in retrospect). It was symbolic partly because it was the first church council called by an emperor (as were all the seven ecumenical councils), but also because of the doctrine that it promulgated, which came to define the terms of Christian confession of Christ, and the way it did this, by the formulation of a "symbol of faith" (called in English, from the first word in the Latin version, a "creed"). Its symbolic nature was early recognized in the tradition that the number of bishops who attended came to 318, the number of the warriors Abraham took to rescue his brother Lot (Gen 14:14), the true number probably being no more than 250. The creed, based on the baptismal profession of faith that had long been structured on faith in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, defined the relationship of God the Son to God the Father by using the term *homoousios*, "consubstantial." It is not unlikely that the bishops of the council understood this in different ways, but it associated the Son with the Father too closely for Arius, the Alexandrian presbyter, whose quarrel with his bishop Alexander had provoked the controversy. There is a good deal of scholarly dispute over the nature of Arius's teaching, but it is most likely that Arius and his beliefs, known as Arianism, represented an older tradition that defined the Son's status as God the Father's intermediary in creation, but radicalized this by making clear that the Son, like the rest of creation, was created out of nothing. Alexander's response, the response that came to be identified with Orthodoxy, was to affirm the unqualified divinity of the Son, and this was expressed in the creed by the term *homoousios*.

The nature of the turning-point represented by Nicaea can be characterized in two ways. First of all, formally, it represents an attempt by the emperor, through a council of bishops, to define the Christian faith. It was the beginning of a process, more or less complete by the end of the century, to define the nature of the Catholic or Orthodox faith, and to exclude as heretics those who could not accept this. Another aspect of this process is found in the massive survey of heresy, compiled by Epiphanios, bishop of Salamis or Constantia in Cyprus, that drew on and systematized the earlier heresiological works already mentioned. In his *Panarion*, his "antidote" for all heresies, Epiphanios gave a structured account of the multitude of alternatives to Orthodox Christian belief, tracing their genealogy from the Fall of human kind, and bringing their number to 80, the number of King Solomon's concubines according

to the *Song of Songs* (6:8—modest compared with the three hundred mentioned in 1 Kings 11:3 [3 Kingdoms 11:1]). Epiphanios's *Panarion* became the standard account of heresy for the Byzantines. Second, with its definition of the divine status of the Son as consubstantial with the Father (*homoousios toi Patri*), the council (probably unwittingly) prescribed the terms of dogmatic definition for the Byzantine period, and set in course the sequence of Christological controversy that was settled by the synods of the conciliar period.

The Council of Nicaea's use of *homoousios* for the Son's relation to the Father is usually regarded as a defining step in the development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity: it unequivocally includes the Son with the Father in the Godhead, a process completed, and defining the Trinitarian nature of God, by the later ascription of *homoousios* to the Holy Spirit. That is true, but the ascription of *homoousios* to the Son had profound implications for Christology, that is, for understanding who Christ is. It excluded any way of regarding Christ as some kind of intermediate being between God and humankind, and thus defined the Christological issue as understanding how one being could be both divine and human.

What became the guiding model of Orthodox Christianity emerged very quickly, and is best expounded from the works of St Athanasios the Great, the principal opponent of Arianism (which he found everywhere among those who rejected Nicaea) and successor to Alexander in the see of Alexandria (as Alexander's young deacon, he had attended the council of Nicaea in 325). Athanasios's central perception is that in the man Jesus of Nazareth, we see the Son or Word of God assuming a human nature and living a human life; he is in a radical sense Emmanuel, "God with us." He is not a messenger or prophet of God, speaking on God's behalf, rather in a quite radical way, he *is* God, living a human life among us, and addressing us as God himself. It is therefore impossible to separate the human and divine in Christ, though they can be distinguished. Everything he does, everything he suffers and endures, he does as both divine and human. So in the healing miracles, he reaches out his hand humanly and heals divinely: but it is a single action. Similarly in his suffering: he suffers humanly (and indeed could not suffer were he not human), but these suffering are borne divinely; instead of grinding down the human, as in normal human suffering, the suffering is borne by the divine and thus exhausts itself in the impassible divine subject. Christ's suffering is thus redemptive. This applies *par excellence* in his death, in which death assails the human, but finds itself encountering the divine, who is beyond the reach of death; death is thus swallowed up in its encounter with the divine. Christ, as Godman, absorbs suffering and frees humankind from suffering; he encounters death, and frees humankind from death. This understanding of Christ lays immense stress on the unity of Christ; there can be no way of separating between the divine and the human, nothing that the human experiences that is not also accepted by the divine.

This understanding of Christ as God living a human life, and especially dying a human death, rapidly became the prevalent way of understanding who Christ is, in the wake of Nicaea's clarification that the one who became incarnate in Christ is the Son of God, *homoousios* with the Father. One of Athanasios's closest supporters, Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea (in Lebanon), attempted to clarify the nature of the

unity of Christ thus understood, something Athanasios never attempted, preferring rather to distinguish Christ's relationship with God from other close relationships, such as that enjoyed by the prophets. For Apollinaris, if Christ was to be a true unity, then the Word or Son of God must take over one of the elements in the human constitution: either the Word was substituted for the human intellect or *nous*, or it was substituted for the human soul or *psyche*. Otherwise the Word would exist alongside the human intellect or soul, and Christ would no longer constitute a unity. Apollinaris's offence was as much that he promoted his supporters against those he regarded as heretics, setting up bishop against bishop, most notably in Antioch, but his theological ideas were rejected by many of the fourth-century Fathers, especially by the theologians of Antioch, Diodoros of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and by the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzos, and Gregory of Nyssa.

The grounds for rejecting Apollinaris were essentially that the Godhead and humanity united in Christ must be both complete and undiminished; as Christ was true God, according to Nicaea, so he must be true man. Working within the Christological model that we have illustrated from Athanasios, Gregory of Nazianzos affirmed that "the unassumed as the unhealed, only that united to the Godhead is saved." Athanasios' model of Christ as God living a human life only makes sense if it is construed as true God living a truly human life. The objections of Diodoros and Theodore to Apollinaris (only imperfectly preserved) laid more stress on the human integrity of Christ's moral actions; as Christ was understood to be one who lived a perfectly good human life, this required that that he had a genuine human will, something denied by Apollinaris (whether he expressed himself in terms of a bipartite or tripartite model of humanity). Apollinaris's heresy was condemned at the ecumenical council held at Constantinople in 381 (Constantinople I), the council that defined the Orthodoxy that the emperor Theodosios I was to impose as the imperial religion.

The next step in the history of conciliar Christology was taken as a result of a controversy that blew up in Constantinople in 428 after the arrival there as Patriarch (or archbishop) of Nestorios, formerly a priest in Antioch. Nestorios, probably a disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who died in 428, was steeped in the anti-Apollinarian traditions of Antioch. In Constantinople, he encountered devotion to the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos*, "Mother of God" (or literally the one "who gave birth to God"), which he denounced as dangerously Apollinarian. The title *Theotokos*, applied to the Virgin, was one of long standing, both as a way of underlining the unity of Christ (used thus by Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasios, and Gregory of Nazianzos), and also as a devotional ascription to Mary, as attested in an early fourth-century (if not earlier) papyrus fragment. The monks, whose devotion was thus attacked, appealed to the archbishop (or patriarch) of Alexandria, Cyril, whose see was being threatened by the rising pretensions of Constantinople, the imperial capital. Cyril was glad of an opportunity to disgrace his fellow-patriarch, but was also appalled at Nestorios's apparent rejection of the title *Theotokos* for the Virgin. With the support of Pope Celestine I, Cyril summoned Nestorios to a council held at Ephesos in 431, which deposed Nestorios for separating between the divine and the

human in his teaching of Christ, for teaching, as the council put it, a doctrine of "two Sons."

It is generally agreed by scholars now that Nestorios's teaching is not truly characterized as a doctrine of two Sons, but his teaching was confused and confusing, and he was no match for Cyril, who was a master theologian and was proud to stand in the tradition represented by his predecessor in the see of Alexandria, Athanasios. Cyril's deposition of Nestorios took place before the bishops of the Antiochene patriarchate (of the [civil] diocese of the East, hence referred to as the "bishops of the East") had arrived in Ephesos. Once they arrived they deposed Cyril. Both synods were initially rejected by the emperor, and it was only after lengthy negotiations with John, archbishop of Antioch (and bribery of the court officials by Cyril), that Nestorios was deposed and eventually exiled to the noisome "Great Oasis" on the Egyptian frontier of the Byzantine empire. Cyril's Ephesine synod was accepted as the third ecumenical synod, subject to a clarifying "formula of union," agreed with John of Antioch, which confessed that Jesus Christ is "one and the same consubstantial with the Father in godhead and consubstantial with us in humanity" (the so-called doctrine of the "double consubstantiality" of Christ), so that there is an unconfused "union of natures," as a result of which the Virgin Mary is rightly called *Theotokos.*

In the course of the controversy against Nestorios, Cyril became fond of the expression *mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkomene* ("one incarnate nature of God the Word") to describe the incarnate Word. He thought the expression Athanasian, taking it from the *Letter to Jovian*, which is in fact a work by Apollinaris. It expressed well the fundamental unity of the Incarnate One. It sounded odd compared with the Formula of Union, which spoke of a "union of natures," but did not specify that in that unconfused union the natures did not become one. So long as Cyril lived, however, the Formula of Reunion was accepted by all sides. Cyril died in 444, and within a few years, controversy had broken out once again in Constantinople.

Eutyches, a venerable archimandrite, immensely well connected through his godson, the Great Koubikoularios Chrysaphios, right-hand man of the emperor Theodosios II, began to insist that, according to Cyril's teaching, after the union there was only one nature, and that nature was not *homoousios* with us. For his flagrant breach of the Formula of Union, Eutyches was deposed by his bishop, Flavian, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Eutyches appealed, as earlier the monks in Constantinople had, to the Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril's successor, Dioskoros. This time, however, it was Flavian who appealed to the pope, now Leo the Great, who supported him in his letter, that came to be known as the "Tome of Leo." Dioskoros set sail for Ephesos, summoned Flavian, deposed him, and had him so mishandled that he died of his injuries shortly afterwards. This synod, which claimed to be the fourth ecumenical synod, was accepted by Theodosios II.

Shortly after, Theodosios was thrown from his horse and killed, to be succeeded by his sister Pulcheria, who married Marcian, a soldier, who thus became emperor. Pulcheria had spent many years in the West, and was friendly with Pope Leo. A synod was called at Chalcedon, to review Ephesos II (which Leo had called a *latrocinium*, a "Robbers' synod"). This synod at Chalcedon, which came to be recognized as the fourth ecumenical synod, summoned Dioskoros to account for his actions at Ephesos;

after refusing the summons three times, he was deposed. The synod went on to draw up a profession of faith, known as the Chalcedonian Definition of Faith (*Horos Pisteos*). This was based on the formula of union, affirming the double consubstantiality of Christ, and the legitimacy of the title *Theotokos*, and expanded the brief mention of an unconfused "union of natures" to: "one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged out of two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person, and a single subsistent being [*hypostasis*]." The papal legates, however, required some explicit contribution from the Tome of Leo, with the result that the phrase "out of two natures" was changed to "in two natures," a change of one letter, apart from the consequent changes in the word endings. This change of one letter, making explicit that the two natures endured in the union, wrecked the careful balancing act that the council had been performing. So far as the Greek bishops were concerned, the issue was whether the *Horos* could be understood as endorsing Cyril of Alexandria's teaching, or undermining it; many felt that his teaching had been undermined. This group, called by their opponents "monophysites," that is, adherents of the doctrine of one nature, refused to accept the council of Chalcedon, or its definition.

The schism caused by the Chalcedonian Definition endures to the present day (as does the much smaller schism with the "Church of the East," called by their opponents "Nestorians," who withdrew from the Byzantine Empire to Persia after the council of Ephesos. See Finneran in this volume). To begin with, the opponents of Chalcedon held the day. Although anti-Chalcedonian bishops were deposed by the imperial government, very soon the emperors themselves began to doubt the wisdom of Chalcedon. In 482, the Emperor Zeno tried to secure union with his "union statement," the *Henotikon*, which affirmed the first three ecumenical synods, and the Christological settlement of Ephesos, and condemned anyone who thought anything else, "either in Chalcedon or any other synod." Chalcedon was thus set on one side, if not explicitly condemned. The *Henotikon*, however, achieved little. Although it secured the agreement of the four Eastern patriarchs, it was not acceptable to those who required an explicit condemnation of Chalcedon, who were thus called "*Akephaloi*" ("headless ones"), though they included the best of the non-Chalcedonian theologians, notably Severos, later Patriarch of Antioch (512–18). Furthermore, it was roundly rejected by the Pope and the West, for whom Chalcedon was Leo's council, and not to be put aside, still less condemned. The acceptance of the *Henotikon* in the East provoked a schism that lasted until the accession to the imperial throne of Justin I in 518, called the "Acacian schism," after Akakios, the Patriarch of Constantinople in 482, who had helped draw up the *Henotikon*.

On Justin I's accession in 518, imperial policy changed, and decided to back Chalcedon. That still left the schism in the East to deal with. At about the time of Justin's accession, a group of "Scythian monks" (from modern Dobruja) arrived in Constantinople with the suggestion for a resolution of the Eastern schism, namely a clear assertion, as a clarification of Chalcedon, that "one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh." In 518, the Scythian monks met with little understanding, either in

Constantinople, or in Rome, where they traveled next. This principle, an Orthodox theopaschism, appealed to Justin's nephew, Justinian, who made it one of the principles of his attempt at reconciliation, which preoccupied him during his time as emperor, from 527 until his death in 565. It was part of an approach to Christology known to scholars as "Neo-Chalcedonianism," or perhaps better "Cyrilline Chalcedonianism," which was provoked mostly by the cogency of Severos of Antioch's attack on Chalcedon. Defenders of Chalcedon in the East had tried to demonstrate how the Definition was drawn often word-for-word from Cyril's writings. Severos' response was that, insofar as that was true, the phrases were torn from their natural context in Cyril's works and given a different meaning.

Cyrilline Chalcedonianism developed as an attempt to read Chalcedon in the light of Cyril's works, and thus undermine Severos' attack on Chalcedon. Cyrilline Chalcedonians include John of Caesarea, Leontios of Jerusalem, and the emperor Justinian himself, who was no mean theologian. The principles of Cyrillian Chalcedonianism can be summed up thus: first, the one person or *hypostasis* of the Chalcedonian definition is the second person of the Trinity (which is a plausible, though not absolutely required, reading of the *Horos*); second, and a consequence of this, it is not only correct, but necessary, to affirm that "one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh;" thirdly, the phrase of which Cyril had later come to be so fond, *mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkomene*, could be interpreted in a way consonant with Chacledon (for an "incarnate nature" implied recognition that the nature was united to the flesh, or manhood, of Christ). Justinian struggled to achieve union on this basis, and at a colloquy held between Chalcedonian Orthodox and non-Chalcedonians in 532 very nearly succeeded, but in the end no union was forthcoming, and in the 540s, a separate non-Chalcedonian hierarchy was established, and Justinian resorted to persecution vainly to secure unity. However, Cyrilline Chalcedonianism was enshrined in the Fifth Ecumenical Synod, held at Constantinople in 553 (Constantinople II), and became part of the theological heritage of Byzantium.

For all his efforts, Justinian was unable to achieve union between Christians in the East. Chalcedon found its supporters mostly in Constantinople, which was attached to Chalcedon because of the canons, especially Canon 28, that gave Constantinople equal privileges with Rome, in the Balkans, Asia Minor and Georgia, and also in Jerusalem, where the constant presence of pilgrims from the whole *oikoumene* encouraged the profession of the ecumenical faith. Much of Syria, Armenia, and Egypt remained firm in their rejection of Chalcedon (in Syria and Egypt non-Chalcedonianism was embraced by both Greek-speakers and speakers of the local vernaculars, Syriac and Coptic; there is no real evidence that the rejection of imperial Christianity was a cover for political separatism).

This split could be exploited by invaders, as was made clear when the victorious Persian shah achieved a settlement that recognized the position of the non-Chalcedonians in that part of the empire he had captured in the 610s and 620s, and the position of the Church of the East in Persia. The successful advance of the Arab armies into the eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire in the 630s only made the question of union between pro- and anti-Chalcedonians more urgent. The suggested bases for reconciliation this time were developments of Cyrilline

Chalcedonianism called monenergism and monothelitism. Both these Christological theories accepted Chalcedon's doctrine of one person and two natures, but further specified that the activity (*energeia*) of the incarnate Christ was single, combining both divine and human attributes—was, in fact, "divine-human" (*theandrike*, "theandric"), in the case of monenergism, or in the case of monothelitism, that since it is not natures that will, but persons, there was only one will (*thelema*) in Christ, a divine will.

Monenergism was the doctrine devised in the 620s, which achieved its first dramatic success in 633, when the newly appointed patriarch of Alexandria, who combined that role with being augustal prefect of Egypt, Kyros, received the non-Chalcedonian clergy of Egypt into communion at Easter, on the basis of a nine-point pact of union, a carefully drawn-up document that endorsed monenergism. Sophronios, the famous Damascene rhetor and monk, shortly to become Patriarch of Jerusalem, was in Alexandria for the occasion, and denounced the pact, somewhat unfairly, Kyros must have thought, as Apollinarianism. Sophronios' protest, taken on to Constantinople, and then on to Rome, could scarcely be ignored, and Sergios, the patriarch of Constantinople who had devised monenergism, in his *Psephos* of 633, forbade the discussion of the activities of Christ, whether one or two. Pope Honorios, in his reply to Sergios' report about the events of Alexandria, made reference to the "one will of our Lord Jesus Christ, true God."

This was incorporated in the *Ekthesis* of 638, an imperial edict issued by the emperor Herakleios, which forbade again discussion of the number of activities in Christ, and endorsed the doctrine of monothelitism. Very slowly, opposition to these Christological formulae emerged, and in 648 another edict, called the *Typos*, was issued by Herakleios' son, Constans II, that forbade discussion of the number of wills in Christ. At the center of this opposition stood the greatest of all Byzantine theologians, Maximos the Confessor. After opposing these doctrines in a series of treatises, and a successful public disputation with Pyrrhos, Sergios' successor as patriarch, who supported monothelitism, in North Africa, whence Pyrrhos had fled after backing the wrong side in the struggle for power after Herakleios's death, Maximos turned to Rome. There, with the support of Pope Martin, he secured a condemnation of monenergism and monothelitism, and the churchmen who had endorsed them (but not the emperors), at the Lateran synod in 649. Pope Martin and Maximos paid for their opposition to the imperial will. Martin was soon arrested, charged with sedition, and condemned to death, a sentence commuted to exile in the Crimea. A little later, Maximos was arrested, tried and condemned for heresy, and exiled to Lazica, where he soon died. At the trials of Maximos, the accounts of which survive, the sense of the political implications of Maximos' actions is palpable.

The issues raised by monenergism and monothelitism were complex, as they involved careful analysis of the nature of human action and willing. The theological issues, however, are presented by the Orthodox as straightforward: both monenergism and monothelitism are, Maximos argues, nothing more than a cover for monophysitism; their affirmation of Chalcedon is nothing more than a pretence. For in human activity (and willing) there is an element that flows from the nature, which cannot be denied without calling in question the integrity of Christ's human nature.

There is also a personal element, that Maximos calls the "gnomic" will (i.e., derived from the opinion, on which my personal actions are predicated), but the gnomic will is a result of moral perplexity which is a consequence of the Fall, and not relevant in a consideration of Christ's human willing. Later opponents of monenergism and monothelitism, such as John of Damascus, regard these heresies as worse than monophysitism, for whereas monophysitism, from the point of view of Cyrilline Chalcedonianism, is basically a muddled way of expressing the faith of Chalcedon, monenergism and (more clearly monothelitism) call in question the integrity of Christ's human nature, and are therefore nothing more than sophisticated forms of Apollinarianism. Central to the Orthodox arguments about monothelitism was a consideration of Christ's Agony in the Garden, in which his struggle between "his" will and the will of the Father, from the point of view of developed Orthodoxy, was to be understood as a struggle between Christ's human will and his divine will (which is identical with the Father's will, as there is only one divine nature, and consequently only one divine will). At both the Lateran synod, and the third synod of Constantinople, the sixth ecumenical synod (Constantinople III), long passages from the Fathers meditating on Christ's Agony in the Garden were read out: an awesome event.

There is one further ecumenical council, recognized by the Byzantine Church: the seventh, held at Nicaea in 787, to condemn iconoclasm (Nicaea II). From the beginning, the dispute over the legitimacy of religious images was presented as a Christological issue. John of Damascus, in his treatises in defence of icons, finds a fundamental justification of images in the Incarnation:

> Now that God has been seen in the flesh and has associated with humankind, I depict what I have seen of God. I do not venerate matter, I venerate the fashioner of matter, who became matter for my sake and accepted to dwell in matter and through matter worked my salvation, and I will not cease from reverencing matter, through which my salvation was worked. (*Imag.* I.16)

It was possibly in response to this argument that the emperor Constantine V tried to involve the making of icons of Christ in a Christological dilemma: either one depicts the humanity of Christ, separate from his divinity, and falls into Nestorianism; or one depicts the humanity of Christ, infused with divinity, and falls into monophysitism. The Seventh Ecumenical Synod, and even more the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, that celebrated the final restoration of icon veneration in 843, presented the making and veneration of icons as a summation of the whole Christian dogmatic tradition, from its affirmation of creation and rejection of dualism to its conviction of the unqualified reality of God's assumption of human nature in Christ.

After the eighth century, the dogmatic tradition of the Byzantine Church achieved a certain stability. Apart from a few relics of the past, Novatianists and even Quartodecimans, heresy was no longer parasitic on the developing dogmatic tradition (or in these cases disciplinary and liturgical traditions) of the Church. Heresy to the Middle and Late Byzantine mind emerges from two directions. First are what seem to be attempts to recover a supposedly pristine apostolic practice by rejecting the

elaboration of the Church's tradition in doctrine, liturgy, and powerful hierarchy of the Church. It is in this way, perhaps, that we should seek to understand the heresies of the Paulicians and the Bogomils. In both cases, we have a highly simplified liturgical and moral life, with a radical poverty aimed at undermining the power structures of the Church. Both of them probably (the latter certainly) develop a dualistic view of the cosmos, involving a struggle between a purely spiritual goodness and evil invested in complexities of human society and the Church. In this way, they both constitute an uncomfortable challenge to the established hierarchy of Church and Empire. The martyrdom of the Bogomil leader, Basil, in the early twelfth century is a rare example in the Byzantine world of resort to the ultimate penalty against heretics. These dualistic heresies proved hard to suppress; they continued to flourish and seem to be one of the sources for the catharism of the Medieval West.

Heresy came from another direction in those Churches that lay outside the jurisdiction of the Byzantine emperor. It was when those Churches began to impinge on the empire that the charges of heresy began to emerge. We find this first with the Armenian Church, a non-Chalcedonian Church that lay just outside the Byzantine frontier, and from the ninth century onwards found the expanding Byzantine empire encroaching upon it. More worrying to the Byzantines (to judge by the canons of the Council of Trullo of 692) than its traditional monophysitism seems to have been its liturgical practices at variance with Byzantine practice, notably the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, seemingly symbolic of its monophysitism.

But the most important location of such infectious heresy was the Western Church, increasingly remote from the Byzantine Church in liturgical practice and church government, though cheek by jowl with it, increasingly in the missionary territories that lay between them. One particular liturgical difference became symbolic of their growing estrangement: the inclusion in the creed of the synod of Constantinople I (an amplification of the creed of Nicaea I, hence usually called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) of the phrase "and the Son" (*Filioque*) in the clause concerning the procession of the Spirit, thus representing the Spirit as proceeding "from the Father and the Son," instead of simply "from the Father." In the Byzantine period, this addition was either regarded as a fundamental heresy in the doctrine of the Trinity, for reasons set out in detail by Patriarch Photios in his letter to the Eastern Patriarchs, or, more irenically, regarded as evidence of the conceptual poverty of the Latin language, with its much more limited vocabulary compared with Greek (thus Theophylactos of Ohrid). It remained, and remains, the fundamental doctrinal issue between the Latin West and the Greek East, despite the attempts of the synods of Lyon (the second in 1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438–9) to achieve reconciliation.

FURTHER READING

For Orthodoxy, see Hussey 1986; Meyendorff 1974; McGuckin 2008. The decrees of the ecumenical councils are available in Tanner (ed.) 1990. A Routledge series, *The Early*

Church Fathers, introduces the major Fathers, with the translation of some key texts: see, for example, Anatolios 2004 on Athanasios; Russell 2000 on Cyril of Alexandria; Louth 1996 on Maximos the Confessor. On the monophysites, see Frend 1972. For John of Damascus, Louth 2002. For Byzantium and the West, Dvornik 1948 on Photios, and Gill 1959 on Ferrara-Florence. Also useful is Louth 2007.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Beyond Byzantium: the Non-Chalcedonian Churches

Niall Finneran

Introduction

This section deals with the history, art, architecture and archaeology of Christian communities that developed within the fringe regions of the Byzantine world. This is a very broad canvas, encompassing northeastern Africa, western Asia, the Silk Road to China and the northern shores of the Indian Ocean. This is the story of independent churches flourishing beyond the direct control of Byzantium, developing distinctive ideological positions and socio-cultural identities, and forging relations with major world religions such as Islam and Buddhism. It would be a mistake to suggest that these churches form a monolithic entity; they do not. The Christian material culture of these churches is highly distinctive and varied (e.g. Zibawi 1995), but the circumstances of their origins and subsequent development, in the Christological controversies that came to a head at the Councils of Ephesos in 431 and Chalcedon in 451, demand that these disparate communities be discussed together (following on from the treatment accorded by the key sources, viz. Atiyah 1968; Binns 2002; Parry et al. 1999). The general tone of this section tends towards the descriptive rather than the theoretical, although some key concepts are introduced and developed. The reason for this approach is simply that given the nature of the subject material, its broad geographical and chronological span, and indeed its relative invisibility in relation to more Eurocentric studies of Christian communities, it demands a treatment that simply and relatively concisely outlines the key dates, figures and themes, the absolute essentials. We are not simply talking about an archaeology of Christianity here; these are archaeologies of Christianities, multiple narratives that in the context of a broad-ranging and thematic study of Byzantium need to be heard.

The churches discussed in this section are generally referred to as "lesser Eastern Churches," "Oriental Orthodox Churches," "anti- or pre-Chalcedonian Churches," or more commonly "monophysite" and "Nestorian" churches. Theologically and historically the latter terms are unsatisfactory, inaccurate, and therefore best avoided.

The term "non-Chalcedonian churches" is used here. The theological details and consequences of the Councils of Ephesos and Chalcedon are outlined elsewhere (see Louth in this volume) and need not be covered again in detail; emphasis here is placed upon understanding their distinctive identities and their socio-cultural impact and relationship with the Byzantine (the self-proclaimed "Orthodox") world. From a material culture perspective, these churches make for an interesting study. One may recognize here more scope for regional experimentation with architectural and artistic form, something mirrored in a concomitant tendency for differential emphasis on liturgical practice. Local customs permeate the Christian veneer, resulting in a vibrant and dynamic syncretic outlook, and this combined (where the churches have survived) with life side-by-side with Islam have resulted in some exceptionally intriguing socio-cultural motifs. It is this relative state of theological, political, and geographical isolation of these communities, in a mainly "Byzantine-free zone" that makes the study of their material culture so intriguing.

Without engaging too heavily in theological terminology, it is best to outline here initially some of the misnomers and misconceptions embodied in the nomenclature. The term "Nestorian" is frequently applied to the Persian Church (the Church of the East; Assyrian Church of the East, part of the eastern Syrian tradition of Christianity), which, from its power base in Mesopotamia at Seleucia-Ctesiphon (south of modern Baghdad), spread out eastwards along the Silk Road trade routes, even reaching the Chinese court in the seventh century. Nestorios was the patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431, and his ideas about the nature of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary saw him condemned at the Council of Ephesos in 431. Neither was the Church of the East founded by Nestorios, nor is it entirely in agreement with his ideas, although it does question the status of the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos*, "God-bearing," a term that implied that Mary was also mother of the Godhead. As such the use of the word Nestorian to describe the Church of the East is at best inaccurate and dated (Brock 1996).

The term "monophysite" is similarly problematic, and is popularly used to describe those eastern Christian communities (predominantly in Syria and Egypt) that do not agree with the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (for a general overview of their history see Frend 1972). The "monophysite" controversy arose from attacks on Nestorios at the Council of Ephesos, using as a basis for argument the Christological position developed by Cyril of Alexandria which emphasized "one incarnate nature of God the word." Many subtleties were lost in translation, and the ensuing controversy came to a head in 451 when both "Nestorians" and "monophysites" were anathematized by the "Orthodox." This is as far as we need to go down this particular theological road, but in terms of the overall scope of the chapter, the Coptic Church of Egypt, elements of the defunct Nubian church, the Ethiopian Orthodox (with its latest outgrowth, the Eritrean Orthodox Church), the Syrian Orthodox Church (West Syrian rite) and the Armenian Orthodox Church are representatives of the non-Chalcedonian churches. For the sake of geographical inclusiveness, two other Eastern Churches are discussed here (neither of them subscribing to the theological positions outlined above, although having their roots in

the controversies): the Maronite Church of Lebanon and the Georgian Church in the Caucasus.

Egypt

Given its relative political, economic, and social importance to the Mediterranean world as a whole, the survey begins in Egypt, the home of the largest modern community of Eastern Christians: the Copts. With over six million adherents in Egypt alone, as well as an extensive diaspora population, the Coptic Church of Egypt is one of the largest of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (see Kamil 2002 for an overview of its history). The use of the word "Copt" is problematic, and it does not refer exclusively to Christians, although that is the now accepted sense. Scholars broadly agree that the term originates either as an Arabic corruption (*Qibt*) of the Greek *Aigyptos* (Egypt) or is a corruption of the ancient Egyptian name for Memphis, Het-Ka-Ptah; either way it is clearly an ethnic term, but is used now to denote the liturgical language of Egypt's Christians and by extension the Christian community itself (Kamil 2002: 1). The Coptic language is defunct, and now only exists in liturgy, having long been usurped by Arabic. Some of the earliest Christian texts in the world are written in Coptic, which developed from Ancient Egyptian cursive writing (Demotic), and which uses a predominantly Greek alphabet with seven Demotic letters added. This was the medium by which Christianity in Egypt spread from the predominantly Greek-speaking urban centers to an accepting rural population (Watterson 1988: 123–7).

According to the New Testament, Egypt provided an escape route for the Holy Family when they fled Herod's persecutions, and the journey of the Holy Family is still commemorated in folk memory, imprinted upon the landscape of Lower Egypt (Meinardus 1999: 14–28). An explicit apostolic connection is provided by Eusebios' *Ecclesiastical History* (2: 16, 24), which states that St Mark preached in Alexandria around AD 41 and converted a shoemaker by the name of Anianus to Christianity before meeting a martyr's death in AD 68 on the ox pasture outside Alexandria's city walls. St Mark's relics were subsequently removed to San Marco in Venice, but his legacy remains, and the line of Coptic Popes of Alexandria view themselves as his heirs in the See of St Mark (Meinardus 1999: 28–35). Historical or archaeological sources alone cannot prove Eusebios' account (see Finneran 2002: 72), but what is clear is that thanks to its Hellenistic legacy, Alexandria in the first century was an immensely cosmopolitan city with a large Jewish population (Alston 1997). Its proximity to Palestine meant that conditions were ideal for the planting of Christianity here (Green 1986), and although we have no archaeological evidence for church buildings much before the fourth century (Martin 1998), we do know from many church histories that Alexandria was a dynamic center of early Christian learning, vying with Antioch and Constantinople.

Notable personalities who gathered around the catechetical school there (itself a legacy of the Hellenic passion for philosophy and learning) included such luminaries

as Pantaenus (d. 195), Clement (c.150–215), Origen (c.185–254), the infamous heretic Arius (c.250–336) and his influential opponent Athanasios (c.295–373). The murder of the female Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia in Alexandria by a Christian mob in 415 marked the culmination in a long struggle against the polytheistic system that had dominated Alexandrian thought for over six hundred years, and saw a fundamental realignment of the spiritual topography of the city (for a broad overview of this period see Haas 1997). This period also saw the appropriation of pagan temples and their conversion to churches all over Egypt, a common theme across the Western and Eastern Empires, yet one which in Egypt was largely accomplished without wholesale destruction of pharaonic sacred sites (e.g. Coquin 1972).

Another important factor in the development of Christian culture in Egypt was the folk memory of the Christian martyr. Egyptian Christians suffered inordinately under the persecutions, so much so that the Coptic Calendar is reckoned from the date of Emperor Diocletian's accession in 284. The martyr was a powerful centralizing force, a model of Christian goodness who represented an example of what it meant to be a Christian. Martyrs' shrines, as in common with many other areas of the Western and Eastern Empires, became foci for pilgrimage, and one of the most important pilgrimage centers was found in the Mareotis desert to the southwest of Alexandria. St Menas' tomb was the focus of an international pilgrimage cult; faithful from all over the Christian world came to visit the tomb of the saint and take home holy water and oil from the site in small clay flasks or *ampoullae*. These distinctive bottles, marked with the symbol and inscription of Menas, have been found all over the Western and Eastern Empires, as far north as the Danube frontier, and they bear witness to the importance of an Egyptian martyr-saint on an international scale. The site itself was repeatedly enriched and attracted royal patronage; Justinian himself was responsible for the enlarged martyr's church. Typically, the town became the focus of anti-Chalcedonian and pro-Chalcedonian rivalry, the Copts being banished to an establishment on the northeast of the town, but as wider political circumstances changed so to would ownership of the shrine (Grossmann 1998).

By the beginning of the fifth century, Christianity was moving outwards from the cities; aided by the development of vernacular theological literature, Egypt's countryside was becoming Christian, and this was also in no small part due to the activities of some of the first Christian monks (Bagnall 1993: 278–89; Bowman 1986: 190–95; Wipszycka 1988). According to some traditions, Egypt was the birthplace of the Christian monastic ideal that spread eastward across Asia, north into the world of Byzantium and westward into the fringes of Europe. The development of a Christian monastic system (many forms of Judaic "monasticism" linked to the idea of *anachoresis*, or withdrawal from society, are noted in Egypt and Palestine) is attributed to an Egyptian named Antony (c.251–356) who, according to his biographer Athanasios of Alexandria, gave up his earthly possessions in 269 and rejected the temptations of the city to tackle the demons of the desert wastes. Eremitic monasticism, in Antony's framework, demanded total isolation and discipline, concentration upon piety and God's work, but as his fame spread, Antony soon became the center of a cult, and attracted a number of disaffected disciples who gathered around him in the desert wastes (for an overview of the wider phenomenon see Gabra 2002; Goehring 1990;

Meinardus 1992 (ed.)). Antony was forced to move on several occasions, but was something of a victim of his own success, and soon his fame spread beyond the confines of Egypt's deserts.

The desire to retain a degree of social connectivity saw the development in Lower Egypt of a new form of semi-anchoritic monasticism, the *laura*, based upon loosely agglomerated, informally structured, small-scale hermit units of three to four monks. Notable laura centers were founded at Nitria, about 40 kilometers south of Alexandria, Kellia ("the cells"), about 20 kilometers south of the Nitria Group (Evelyn-White 1932; Henein and Wuttman 2000) and in the Wadi el-Natrun (the Desert of Scetis), which subsequently became the major monastic center in Lower Egypt (Evelyn-White 1933), and which would attract monks from all over the Eastern Christian world. John Cassian (c.360–435), a monk from Palestine who had spent a long time in Egypt, is credited with bringing the Egyptian monastic ideal to Marseille, in southern France, in the fifth century. Monasticism was one of the most potent socio-political movements shaping the Byzantine religious world in the mid-first millennium.

Antonian monasticism, individualistic, or semi-anchoritic in emphasis, contrasted with the monastic rule developed by an Egyptian by the name of Pachomios (c.292–347) who is widely regarded as founder of the cenobitic (communal) form of monasticism (Goehring 1996). A former soldier, Pachomios may have been influenced by his memories of the barrack life, and this form of monasticism rapidly attracted (in contrast to the eremitic form) a wider cross-section of society, attracted to the large *koinonia* (communities) developing at Pbow and Tabennisi in middle Egypt. The organization in these settlements was hierarchical, and formulated the model of communal monastic living that soon developed in the wider Christian world: at the head was the father, and underneath him were numerous monks of different grades and stewards to care for provisioning of the settlement. Monks were usually divided into "houses" of about 40 brothers, who often worshipped and ate together. The emphasis was on the communal rather than individual life. Such was the importance of the Egyptian monastic system within the fabric of the Coptic Church that it provided successive patriarchs of the Church and attracted monks from all over Byzantium to train at these establishments. One of the key written sources for monasticism during this period, the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*), originated as a Greek manuscript from Scetis, and such was the interest in Egypt's monastic movement that it was subsequently translated into a wide range of other languages; this was a best-selling religious work across Byzantium.

It is around this time that we begin to see a flowering of a distinctive Egyptian Christian form of architecture and art. The accent here is upon syncretism; where Alexandria was historically a meeting-place of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Eastern social and cultural influences, this too is reflected in Egypt's Christian cultural heritage. The earliest churches were often sited in Pharaonic and pagan temples, and soon they began to evolve into specially constructed buildings with very heavy walls, and distinctive layouts (three altars are often provided, the reason being that an altar may only be used once in the liturgical day). The congregation was separated by sex, giving an element of gendered space, and water played an important part in the

liturgy, with the provision of special tanks for holy water used for baptism and on special feast days. Many architectural embellishments on churches show motifs which are of a clear Eastern origin, although there are many clear links with the Mediterranean Christian world; the gradual closing-off of the holy sanctuary (*heikal*) from the "public" naos (nave) by means of an iconostasis and *khurrus* (bema) in the layout of the church being a common theme. Monastic architecture reflects the Pachomian ideal, emphasizing the notion of communal living. The standard Egyptian monastery is focused upon a number of church buildings, with specialized rooms for eating and cooking, and a range of domestic living spaces allotted according to seniority in the community. The surrounding wall only assumed a defensive purpose in the late first millennium AD (in the face of Bedouin attacks), and many older monasteries possess a *Kasr*, or keep, a central fortified place of refuge for the community, complete with small chapels and storerooms (see Walters 1974 for a major overview). The extant major monasteries of the Wadi el-Natrun and SS Paul and Antony on the northern Red Sea coast (see Bolman 2002) are fine examples of the epitome of Egyptian monastic architectural space, a motif that has been translated into the monasteries of Mount Athos and the great foundations of late antique/early medieval Western Europe.

Portable art reflected the confused identity of Egyptian Christian history. Artistic conventions borrowed heavily from ancient Egyptian motifs, yet were also tempered by contact with the Byzantine world. The *ankh*, the ancient Pharaonic symbol of life, was reinterpreted as a Christian cross. The development of the icon (possibly from Greco-Roman funerary portraiture; see Rassart-Debergh 1990) is an important artistic feature across the Eastern Christian world. Some of the earliest icons in Egypt have been found at the monastery of Apollo at Bawit and from sites in the Fayuum, and date from the sixth century (some contemporary icons from St Catherine's on Mount Sinai are probably Byzantine in provenance). At an early stage, Coptic icons took on a distinctive identity: figuratively informal, with wide-open eyes, the depictions are a far cry from the formalized Byzantine pose. A combination of the conquest of Islam (which forbade figurative depiction) and the wider Iconoclastic Controversy saw the erosion of the Coptic icon-writing tradition by the ninth century, but by the eighteenth century, under the guidance of the painter John the Armenian, icons became popular again and remain so to this day. A number of Pharaonic and Greco-Roman motifs are reinterpreted in the Christian context of icon writing: the Blessed Virgin Mary suckling the infant Jesus (*Mary lactans*) in a pose reminiscent of Horus/Harpocrates being suckled by his mother Isis, perhaps emphasizing the human nature of Jesus, a case of syncretism reflecting theological outlook, and St Michael as the judge of the departed, carrying the Pharaonic Scales of Thoth by which he reckoned the goodness of the soul.

Wider political factors began to ensure that Egypt's Christian community would turn away from the authority of Constantinople and Antioch, and identify themselves with other anti-Chalcedonian churches of the East (Frend 1982). The secular and ecclesiastical powers at Constantinople sought to assuage the situation through compromise, or in some cases by appointing patriarchs of Alexandria who toed the line. Patriarch Theodosios (536–7) was an anti-Chalcedonian, and such was his persistence

in preaching against it that he was brought to Constantinople by Justinian and placed under house arrest. The work of Jacob Baradeus (see the section on Syrian Orthodoxy) soon strengthened the hand of the non-Chalcedonians in Egypt, and soon there were two competing church hierarchies in Alexandria. The Melkites (the Orthodox, Greek-speaking Byzantine Church: the name means, pejoratively, in Arabic "those of the king"), a minority in Alexandria supported directly by the Byzantine authorities, could not survive the momentous events of the seventh century. In 639, Arab armies swept into Egypt, and in 640, at the Battle of Heliopolis, they inflicted a decisive defeat on the Byzantine army. When Alexandria finally fell in 642, Melkite power, politically underpinned by the Byzantine empire, was eroded. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate retains a foothold in Alexandria and at the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai; both represent the last vestiges of the legacy of Byzantium in Egypt. "Coptic" Christians soon found themselves as central players in the bureaucracy of the new Arab state, and they were able to retain a degree of religious freedom, although they were subject to a special tax for non-Muslims (the *jizyah*).

On the whole, the following centuries saw the gradual diminishing of the power of the Christian Church as Egypt's population embraced Islam. The monasteries of Upper and Lower Egypt, however, remained the power base of the Church, and safeguarded Egypt's Christian heritage. From an integral part of the Byzantine political and economic world, we move south to a real "frontier zone" to consider the political and ideological impact of the political machinations of Justinian's court upon the small medieval kingdoms of Nubia along the middle Nile region.

Nubia

Nubia is centered upon the region between the first and second cataracts of the Nile in what is now southern Egypt/northern Sudan. As a result of salvage archaeology conducted here in the 1960s in advance of the construction of the Aswan High Dam, we have an exceptionally fine corpus of Christian (late antique and early medieval) remains, from village churches to large cathedrals with magnificent frescoes, many of which are now preserved in museums in Sudan and Europe, especially Warsaw (for an overview see Adams 1977; Edwards 2004). Historically, this area formed the southern fringe of Egypt's sphere of influence, and subsequently the borderlands of Roman and Byzantine Egypt, peopled by pastoralists who acted as client buffer kingdoms (Kirwan 1977; Welsby 2002: 18). In the Old Testament, the area is known as Kush, which corresponds to a Nilotic state of that name in the mid-first millennium BC, but in the Septuagint, its name is confusingly translated as *Aethiopia*. According an account in *Acts* 8: 27, Philip baptized an "Ethiopian" eunuch named Agorastos. His queen, also called an "Ethiopian," was known as Kandace. Undoubtedly this episode refers to Nubians, not Ethiopians.

After the decline of the Merotic polity in the fourth century, the vacuum in the north was filled by a successor polity known as the X group or Ballana culture (Edwards 2004: 195–201). From the fragments of the Merotic world, and in response to events northward in Egypt, we see the emergence of three distinct Nubian

medieval polities. In the north, with its capital at Faras (now submerged beneath Lake Nasser) was the state of Nobadia; southward, with its capital at Old Dongola was the state of Makhuria; and finally, southward again the kingdom of Alwa/Alodia, with its capital at Soba. The evangelization of these states occurred as a direct result of Justinian's political strategies, and presents an interesting example of the rivalry between anti-Chalcedonian and pro-Chalcedonian factions with the Imperial Court. Justinian, who in 539 banned pagan worship at the Temple of Philae near Aswan, now had designs on bringing the Nubian into the Byzantine world.

According to the historian John of Ephesos (whose perspective may have been colored as he was an anti-Chalcedonian), Justinian's wife, the strongly anti-Chalcedonian Theodora, hearing of her husband's designs on the area, sent a monk named Julian in 543 to Nobadia. He converted the court at Faras, but before he was able to reach Makhuria, a Melkite expedition sponsored by Justinian himself had succeeded in converting the king there to the Chalcedonian perspective (this fact is not mentioned by John of Ephesos). After her death in 547, Theodora's emissaries under Longinos, bishop of Philae, reached Soba, and in response to a request sent by the royal family of Alwa began to baptize the royal court and thus ensured that anti-Chalcedonians had a foothold in the southernmost part of the Middle Nile region. It would be fair to say that the account is not borne out by the archaeological picture. Although it was clear that in the north, especially at Qasr Ibrim and Faras, there was some degree of probable mercantile Christian penetration of Nubia, there was no concerted church-building activity in the region until the sixth century. In fact, the pattern of the Christianization of the region is still largely poorly understood (Edwards 2001).

Nobadia and Makhuria merged politically in the early eighth century under the dynamic King Merkurious of Makhuria (697–710), and it is not readily clear which form of Christianity was adopted in the unified state. Being relatively weak and politically isolated, the medieval Nubian kingdoms were unable to offer much resistance to the conquering Arabs from the seventh century onwards, although they were bound by a treaty (*baqt*) that ensured some degree of political stability and religious freedom, but it was a precarious existence (for a more detailed discussion see Vantini 1981 *passim*). In 1173, Turan Shah, brother of Saladin, attacked Qasr Ibrim, and this episode marked the gradual decline of Nubian Christianity and its links with the Mediterranean world; although a small Christian state, Dotawo, survived in the south until the fifteenth century, the legacy of Justinian and Theodora was doomed. Unlike its neighbors to the north and southeast (Egypt and Ethiopia), Christianity died out entirely, only returning in some small degree with nineteenth-century missionaries.

Perhaps the challenge to the archaeologist, historian, or art historian is to try to understand how these political and religious machinations are reflected in the cultural record. We know from historical sources that Longinos built a church in Nobadia in either 565 or 575; but it is possible that there were some smaller, more ephemeral churches catering for the small mercantile Christian population at Faras. As with Egypt, a number of pagan temples housed early churches; there is a church in King Taharqo's temple at the important site of Qasr Ibrim, and there are Christian inscriptions in the Temple at Dendur, which date from around 559–74. Extensive data from

the Nubian salvage excavations allowed the archaeologist William Adams to construct an outline typology of Nubian church buildings showing a gradual evolution of the basilican-style building (Adams 1965). Particular interest attaches to the Christian buildings at the Nobadian capital Faras; the cathedral was the center of a see that lasted almost 600 years. A number of church buildings have been excavated here, but it is the cathedral with its fine frescoes that catches the attention; these impressive paintings mix secular subjects (bishops, princes, etc.) with Old Testament and New Testament motifs found in Eastern Christian art as a whole, albeit in a very distinctive, colorful Nubian figurative style (Godlewski 1992).

At the Makhurian capital of Old Dongola, Polish archaeologists have uncovered significant evidence of large-scale Christian building works, including the distinctive cruciform church and the Church of the Granite Columns (Gartkiewicz 1990). Ongoing work in the south at Soba has uncovered what might be Nubia's first double cathedral (these forms are widely noted across the Eastern Christian world). In short, the historical sources tell us that Nubia was a central ideological battleground between the Melkite and anti-Chalcedonian factions, and more than anywhere else this struggle mirrored wider geopolitical struggles within Byzantium, but archaeology alone cannot distinguish between the two forms of Christianity; church plans are the same, as are burial practices (cf. Adams 1998). In some cases, Greek rather than Coptic inscriptions may betoken the liturgical influence, some of the names within the church hierarchy may reflect Orthodox practice, and it is possible that depictions of priestly vestments in frescoes may yield identification with Orthodox or Coptic influence, but in truth this not a question that archaeology or art history alone can tackle.

What is clear is that Christianity remained an important social factor in the rural areas into the beginning of the second millennium AD, but it waned rapidly, to be replaced by Islam (Cuoq 1986). One important factor that has been relatively overlooked is the role that the Nubian monastic system had in acting as a centralizing Christian force; from the limited extant range of Nubian monastic sites (see Anderson 1999), it is perhaps the case that Egyptian influence was strong in their layouts, but as a rule, Nubian monasteries lack the impressive fortifications noted at contemporary Egyptian sites. They would have been easy targets for raiding parties, and unlike Egypt and Ethiopia, the monastic system could not guarantee the survival of Christianity. Many social and political factors combined to thwart the continuation of a Christian way of life on the Middle Nile. Links to the Byzantine world became difficult to maintain, and the Christian communities found themselves increasingly isolated. To the southeast, in the mountain fastness of Ethiopia, however, Christianity thrived in the face of the pressures from Islam.

Ethiopia

The Aksumite kingdom, which dominated the northern highlands of Ethiopia from the first century BC until approximately the ninth century AD, enjoyed close links with the Mediterranean world. The first-century trading guide, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, mentions the Aksumite port of Adulis (in modern Eritrea; Casson 1993),

and the geographers Strabo and Ptolemy both refer to Aksum. Its tri-metallic coinage was struck to the Roman standard prior to Diocletian's currency reforms of c.290 AD, and finds of Roman and South Arabian coins at a number of Aksumite sites (as well as obvious imports such as amphorae and glass objects) attest to wide international trade links. Aksum and its king were a small and exotic part of the broader Byzantine system. After the adoption of Christianity by the Aksumite court in the mid-fourth century, ecclesiastical sources, such as Kosmas Indikopleustes' *Christian Topography*, shed more light on the relationship between Aksum and the Byzantine world (Kirwan 1972). Unlike Egypt and the rest of the Roman Empire, but like Nubia and Armenia, the instrument of conversion was the king himself, and here we find Christianity adopted enthusiastically by the elite. Such a process of conversion had obvious cultural ramifications.

According to Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History* (1: 9–10), in AD 346 a shipwrecked Christian Syrian by the name of Frumentius, along with his brother Aedesius, found his way to the court of King Ezana. His learning impressed the king, and soon Frumentius traveled to Alexandria to be consecrated by Athanasios as bishop of Ethiopia. He then returned to oversee the conversion of Aksum (this account would seem to be supported by a letter from the emperor Constantius addressed to the co-regents of Aksum, Aizana, and Saizana, offering terms for an alliance). Frumentius would be the first of many patriarchs appointed by Alexandria to minister to the Ethiopians, a situation that ended with Ethiopian autocephaly in 1951 (see also Munro-Hay 1997). The details surrounding the conversion of Ezana are vague (Kaplan 1982), and it should not be expected that the whole of the Aksumite empire became Christian immediately, but many cultural indicators of the conversion speak of a profound ideological change. Burials, at least for the elite, are no longer marked by tall, decorated stelae, inscriptions speak of a god in the singular, and the design of the coinage sees the substitution of the pagan crescent symbol with a cross and the addition of Christian inscriptions. One such inscription is a direct Ge'ez (Ethiopic) translation of the invocation that greeted Constantine's vision at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312: "By this sign you will conquer" (Finneran 2002: 130–34). Aksum was undoubtedly viewed as an ally by Byzantium (Munro-Hay 1991: 15ff.); a sixth-century Byzantine ambassador, Nonnosus, has left us an account via the historian John Malalas of the court at Aksum, and the historian Prokopios tells us that the emperor Justinian wrote to King Kaleb of Aksum asking him to take military action against Dhu Nuwas, king of the Himyar in southwestern Arabia, who was persecuting Christians there. It is also clear that during the latter stages of the first millennium AD, Ethiopians constituted a significant presence in Jerusalem, from where they undoubtedly came into contact with representatives of many other Christian peoples.

No church buildings dating from the early Christian period are visible today at Aksum. According to the British scholars David Buxton and Derek Matthews (1974), the earliest cathedral at Aksum was probably a porticoed five-aisled basilica, much as would be expected given the strength of Syrian influence at the court (Marassini 1990). The present building dates only from the mid-seventeenth century. Subsequently Ethiopian churches evolved to embrace a very strong local flavor, ultimately adopting a circular form derived from central-Ethiopian (Shoan) domestic architec-

ture. Other distinctive Byzantine architectural features have been noted, unsurprisingly perhaps, at the Aksumite port of Adulis (Heldman 1994).

Another clear legacy of Syrian contact was the development of Ethiopian monasticism. A secondary wave of evangelization under the so-called Syrian "nine saints" and other missionaries known as the *sadqan* in the sixth century saw an extension of Christianity in the highlands under the aegis of a number of charismatics. The major monastery of Debra Damo to the east of Aksum is an important example of an early Ethiopian monastic settlement. Sited atop a flat-topped mountain, or *amba* (possibly the site of a pre-Christian sacred inclosure), the architecture of the church buildings clearly recalls the style of pre-Christian, Aksumite architecture skeuomorphically represented on the decorated stelae at Aksum. As with the Byzantine foundations of Mount Athos, no female, human or animal, may set foot in these precincts. Unlike its Egyptian counterpart, the Ethiopian monastery is not architecturally demarcated in the landscape, it is less structured and more obviously focused upon its church building (Finneran and Tribe 2003).

Aksum declined in the ninth century; the causes of social collapse in the highlands are unclear, although the military campaign of a pagan (some sources describe her as Jewish) queen named Gudit may have contributed to its ruin. Strong central government in Ethiopia lapses for a period of almost two hundred years, and it is clear that the monastic system, which had encroached southward into the Agaw and Shoa regions, acted as a centralizing force for Christian survival here. In the mountainous Agaw region, Christianity flourished during the twelfth century onwards with the emergence of the Zagwe dynasty, which represented a political break of the hegemony of the northern "Solomonic" line. King Lalibela's eponymous capital is known for its fine rock-hewn churches, which represent a high point of Ethiopian medieval architecture; many of these establishments, which were undoubtedly built over many years under varied royal patronages (and in some cases, it may be noted, were actually originally secular buildings) embody a number of familiar Aksumite architectural themes, yet retain common ecclesiastical architectural themes. The basilican form predominates, and the church of Giyorgis (St George) is an unusual example of a centralized design so common elsewhere in the Byzantine world. Manuscript illumination, literature and painting all undoubtedly indicate that Ethiopia was still very much open to the cultural influence of the eastern Christian world (Leroy 1960): the Church was still effectively controlled by the Coptic Patriarchate at Alexandria, and growing strategic concerns in the fifteenth century saw the imperial court come under increasing Portuguese influence. Ethiopia opened up to the West again, a reorientation reflected in its art and architecture.

Christianity remains a profound socio-ideological force in Ethiopia, although its dominance was eroded by the 1974 revolution and the advent of the Marxist junta. The aftermath of the Civil War of the 1980s–90s also saw the establishment of an autocephalous Eritrean Orthodox Church linked to Alexandria. The Christian artistic and architectural heritage of Ethiopia owes much to the thread of tradition that runs back to Aksumite time, but terms of ecclesiastical literature (and to some extent the decoration of manuscripts) we can recognize as obvious links to the Byzantine world. This is not the case to a great extent with church architecture, which retains a very

strong autochthonous flavor. The distance from the Christian worlds of the eastern Mediterranean is manifested in a particularly syncretic form of Christianity that obviously embodies a number of Semitic ideas: dietary laws prohibit the consumption of shellfish or pork; circumcision is undertaken on the eighth day after birth; the Sabbath is celebrated on Saturday rather than Sunday; and there are a number of "magical" elements incorporating the use of amulets and spells. Theologically bound to the Alexandrian tradition of Athanasios, with a strong Syrian heritage and marked autonomous socio-cultural identity, the Christians of Ethiopia remained far removed from the theological and political issues that dominated Byzantium in the mid-first millennium AD, and gave birth to a wealthy, dynamic, and distinctive Christian cultural patrimony (see Grierson (ed.) 1993).

West Syrian Christianity (Syrian Orthodox Church)

Leaving the ancient Christian communities of Africa, and the very southerly fringes of the Byzantine world and its influences, I turn now to the Levant, and a consideration of the legacy of one of the most important of the non-Chalcedonian Christian communities: the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Upon the death of Theodosios I at the end of the fourth century, the lands of the Levant (modern Israel, Syria, and Lebanon) were, as part of the Prefecture of the East, divided into a number of administrative provinces. Chief among the cities here were Jerusalem and Antioch, homes to thriving and cosmopolitan Christian communities, the oldest in the Christian world. More than anywhere else, the distinctive history and identity of Syrian Christianity is linked to a place, Antioch, and a language, Syriac, which was the dialect of Aramaic spoken at the important center of Edessa. Edessa, the modern southern Turkish city of Urfa, plays a very important part in our narrative. Originally a Seleucid foundation, Eusebios claims that it was the first-ever Christian kingdom. According to tradition, King Abgar V (c.4 BC–AD 7) wrote to Jesus asking to meet with him. Jesus replied by sending the Mandylion, a towel with the imprint of his features, and his apostle Thaddeus (Syriac: Addai) to convert the king and his people (Kessler and Wolf, 1998). This tradition gave Edessa a strong Christian identity and helped shape Syrian Christianity. It is more probable that conversion was achieved under King Abgar VIII (the Great) in the late second century. Edessa subsequently became a center for Christian scholarship when, in the mid-fourth century, the important Christian center of Nisibis fell to the Sassanians and a number of scholars fled to the city. A theological school developed and became renowned across the Syriac Christian world; a notable personality who emerged from Edessa was Ephrem the Syrian (c.306–73), whose writings show a distinctive oriental perspective on Christian faiths, heresies, and biblical commentaries, and who became highly influential in the formation of Syriac Christian scholarship. The influence of Edessa may be gauged in the fact that the Syriac dialect of Aramaic became the dominant liturgical language of not only the West Syrian rite, but also the East Syrian rite ("Nestorians," see below); in the West the more rounded *estrangela* and linear

serta scripts were favored, and in the East a distinctive so-called "Nestorian" script developed. The missionary success of the East Syrian church resulted in the distribution of Syriac Christian inscriptions across central Asia, into India, China, Tibet, and Mongolia.

At this stage, it is necessary to be more precise about the idea of "Syrian Christianity." I have alluded above to the West and East Syrian rites; in fact the Syriac liturgical tradition encompasses a wide range of communities. The two major non-Chalcedonian groups are the Church of the East (discussed below) and the Syrian Orthodox (West Syrians) discussed here. There are also a number of Uniate or Catholic Churches, the result of Roman Catholic missionary activity. These churches include the Syrian Catholic communities, the Maronite Church of Lebanon (discussed also in this section), and a number of southern Indian churches (discussed in the final section). One of the key personalities responsible for creating a strong anti-Chalcedonian identity for the Syrian church was Jacob Baradeus, a monk born in the late fifth century. Baradeus enjoyed the patronage of Justinian's anti-Chalcedonian wife Theodora, and in c.543, she ensured that he was appointed as metropolitan of Edessa. In this role he was able to spread the anti-Chalcedonian message, reinforcing links with the Egyptians and travelling across the eastern fringes of the Byzantine empire: such was his influence that members of the Syrian Orthodox Church were once known as Jacobites (Bundy 1978).

Firmly rooted in the Mediterranean world, in the lush Orontes valley was the important Syrian city of Antioch (the modern city of Antakya), a place that vied with Alexandria and Carthage for the depth of its Christian scholarship and learning. According to tradition, St Peter himself established himself as bishop in Antioch prior to his arrival in Rome, and it is in Antioch that we first find the label "Christian" applied to followers of Christ (Acts 11: 26). The development of a powerful independent and vigorous Antiochene school of Christian theology, involving such figures as John Chrysostom (347–407), essentially formed the basis for the Chalcedonian controversy and the shaping of a distinctive Eastern Christian theology. After the mid-fifth century, as with Alexandria, we see the internal battle lines within the city drawn up between powerful Melkite and anti-Chalcedonian factions. The fortunes of the Christian community in Antioch reflected wider geopolitical issues; in the sixth century the city was seized by the Persian king Chosroes, which resulted in the gradual loss of influence of the pro-Byzantine Melkites, and the Arab conquest in 638 saw a further erosion in the status of the Melkites and effectively strengthened the hand of the anti-Chalcedonian factions in the city and the countryside around. The name of Antioch resonates through the history of Christianity in the East, and it was once a cosmopolitan Christian city; apart from possessing Orthodox (Melkite) and of course non-Chalcedonian Syrian Orthodox patriarchs, there were also patriarchs representing Maronite, Uniate, East Syrian, Armenian, and Georgian communities. These offices still exist, but none of the functionaries now live in the city. Away from the chief urban centers of northern Syria and the Mediterranean littoral, the countryside was firmly anti-Chalcedonian in outlook, and underpinning the rural Christian world was a monastic system at least as old and as vigorous

as anything Egypt had to offer (Brock 1973). Both eremitic and cenobitic forms of monasticism are readily recognizable, but there is a definite local flavor to these monastic traditions which contrasts with the Egyptian model (Canivet 1975).

An important figure in the Syrian monastic world was St Symeon Stylites (c.390–459) whose fame, like that of the Egyptian ascetic St Antony, became widespread through Christendom. A Cilician by birth, Symeon lived for almost 50 years atop a 20-meter-high pillar at a monastery, Qal'at Sem'ān, in northern Syria near Telanissos to the north of Aleppo. This monastery rapidly became a center of pilgrimage, and in the late fifth century, a massive cruciform basilica was constructed here to cater for large numbers of pilgrims. Living on a column was a peculiarly Syrian form of ascetism; the Egyptian hermit generally tended to withdraw from society (*anachoresis*), and although that pattern of eremitic monasticism is found also in the Syrian world, sitting on a pillar became the fashion after Symeon's death. Peter Brown has also pointed out another contrast between the Egyptian holy man and the Syrian holy man: where the former attempted to avoid society, the latter was prone to become involved politically at a local level, and was often called upon to arbitrate in disputes (Brown 1971).

The cenobitic form of monasticism is Syria became an important factor in the rural economy as many monks flocked to the region and monasteries acquired a great deal of wealth and prestige. The monastery at Dayr Tel Ada on the limestone massif near Aleppo, and not far from Qal'at Sem'ān, was a vast foundation, almost a city, covering the side of a mountain. Within this region, the area of the so-called dead cities, we find many monastic foundations and fine church buildings (e.g. Tchalenko 1953–8). This region, which seems to have been depopulated in the seventh century, was once an economic powerhouse in the hinterland of Antioch, and it offers us ample scope for understanding the evolution of Syrian Christian architectural forms. The usual basilican form predominates (best seen at Serjilla, Ruweiha, and Mshabbak), apses are always present, and in many cases ornate mouldings mark out the tops of doors and windows. These naturalistic motifs, while obviously embodying a distinct Byzantine and Hellenistic heritage, also show strong Persian influence. It is a very distinctive and visually satisfying form of stone building, and one which seems to fit well in the rugged limestone landscape (Peňa 1997).

To the south, in the mountains behind Nabk, the recently restored Syrian Catholic monastery of Dayr Mar Musa el Habashi, which means Moses the Ethiopian, and bears witness to the cosmopolitan nature of the monastic communities in the area, possesses exceptionally fine frescoes dating from the eleventh century. The monastic tradition of the Syrian Christians, straddling both the West and East Syrian worlds, has historically been focused upon a region of southeastern Turkey north of Nisibis known as the Tur Abdin (meaning Mountain of the Servants of God). The now rather neglected monasteries here were described in an excellent work by Gertrude Bell (edited by Marlia Mango 1982) and more recently by the Syriac scholar Andrew Palmer (Palmer 1990). The monasteries date, at the earliest, from the fourth century, and in some cases were richly endowed with imperial patronage. The area, as Palmer points out, contained a number of earlier Zoroastrian sacred places (Palmer 1990: 30), and the establishment of the first monasteries in the region attracted a large

number of monks of all types—recluses, pillar dwellers, and cenobitic monks who generally did not engage in the sort of work envisaged by Pachomios in Egypt (Palmer 1990: 110). The monasteries declined during medieval times, and now only a few are inhabited.

The frescoes of Mar Musa are not the only examples of a rich local Christian artistic heritage. The Rabbula Gospels (Florence, Laur. Plut. I, 56), named after the scribe who wrote them in the late sixth century, are an exquisite example of the illuminator's art. The depictions do show a clear Byzantine influence; rich natural imagery is used and the actual depictions of the scenes from the gospels are accurately portrayed. Similar schemes are noted in two sixth/seventh-century Syriac manuscripts from Mardin at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (for an overview see Leroy 1964). Byzantine influence in the arts remained strong, surviving the Islam Umayyad and Abbasids; the Church of St John Negar near Mosul, Iraq, was actually decorated by two Greek workers and thus shows a strong Byzantine influence. The work of Tchalenko has confirmed largely that Syrian churches were faced internally with plaster as a basis, no doubt, for schemes of fresco painting, but these have rarely survived. Apart from Mar Musa, Nabk, only fragmentary scenes may be seen at the church at Qarah near Homs. Icon painting was also popular, but is something of a late phenomenon, rather like the Coptic tradition. It was centered mainly upon Aleppo, where the artist Yusuf al-Musuawwir founded a dynasty of icon painters who closely followed the ancient Byzantine schemes of icon composition.

The final example of a church in the west Syrian tradition is that of the Maronites, which borrows heavily from the Syrian legacy yet is linked inextricably to the mountains of Lebanon.

The Maronite church of Lebanon (and diaspora communities; see Moosa 1986 *passim*) is named after a fourth/fifth-century hermit by the name of St Maron, or Maro (350–433), who is mentioned by John Chrysostom in a letter of 404 and led a solitary life at the side of the Orontes river somewhere near Apamea (modern Syria). A monastery known as Bet Maroun was constructed in 452 by the Emperor Heraklios, and it soon attracted large numbers of monks from across the region (Wehbé 1966). Initially the monks adopted the findings of the Council of Chalcedon, aligning themselves with the authorities in Constantinople, although such an attitude, in an area of vehement anti-Chalcedonian feeling, brought them many enemies and their monastery was sacked in the sixth century (other sources suggest that an earthquake was responsible). Enjoying immense prestige, the monastery was rebuilt by Justinian and continued to thrive. When Heraklios' *Ekthesis* of 638 promoted the compromise position of monotheletism (belief in a single will in Christ), it was adopted by the monastic community, who maintained their support even after it was condemned at the third council of Constantinople in 680–81, putting them in a very unusual position in the Christian East. The Arab conquest favored the Maronites; with the erosion of Melkite power at Antioch, a Maronite patriarchate was established there in the eighth century, and what had begun as an essentially monastic community developed its own hierarchy.

During the tenth century, followers of the church gravitated towards the area around Mount Lebanon, and monastic establishments were set up in the Wadi

Qadisha. When the Crusaders arrived on the coast in the late eleventh century, the Maronites generally proved to be more accepting and welcoming, and soon the influence of Western Christianity would be felt. The Maronite patriarch visited Rome in 1213, and in 1215 he attended the opening of the Fourth Lateran Council; his position as head of the Maronite Church was confirmed by the Pope, marking the beginning of a long relationship with the Church of Rome. Although this church is numerically small, its cultural influence has been considerable, and to this day it remains an important part of the Eastern Christian world.

Armenia

Before considering the vast tapestry of the Eastern Syrian rite, the so-called Nestorian world, it would be as well to turn to a consideration of the Christian communities of a neighboring region, one of the utmost strategic importance to the Byzantine world, sandwiched as it was between the demands of Constantinople and Persia: the Caucasus.

The latest manifestation of an independent Armenia is a pale shadow of the classical kingdom of that name, which at various points in the first millennium AD extended across eastern Anatolia and into what is now northern Iran. Armenia may justifiably lay claim to being the oldest continuously Christian state in the world, and this rich history, allied to a fiercely proud and distinctive national identity, has ensured that the non-Chalcedonian Armenian Church has survived the predations of time (for an overview see Redgate 1998). In Roman times, this was a contested frontier landscape. In 65 BC, Pompey moved against the Caucasian kingdoms of Colchis, Iberia, and Albania, and the area became part of the Pontic Limes and a province of Cappadoccia. At the end of the fourth century, Iberia (Georgia) came under Persian control, while Armenia was proclaimed a Roman province during Trajan's eastern campaign in 113–17. Henceforth Armenia would exist as a semi-autonomous frontier polity awkwardly facing the might of Persia.

The organized Church in Armenia dates to 314, when Gregory the Illuminator, a Parthian, was consecrated as bishop of Armenia at Caesarea, Cappadoccia following the conversion of King Trdat (298–330), although Eusebios' *Ecclesiastical History* (6: 46, 2) mentions a certain Meruzanes, Bishop of Armenians, in a letter from Dionysios of Alexandria in c.260, and also hints (9, 8: 2) that there were Christian Armenians at the time of Maximinus' persecutions in 312–13. We must allow, given the strategic importance of the Caucasus and its proximity to a number of completing polities, that a degree of Christian contact had been known in Armenia since the second century. Gregory's consecration cemented the official importance of Christianity within the kingdom in the early fourth century, and until the loss of independence and the division of Armenia between the Eastern Roman Empire (under Theodosios) and the Persians (under Sapor III) in 387, the prelate (or Catholikos) was chosen from members of Gregory's family; at this time the See moved from Astisat on Lake Van to Etchmiadzin near Yerevan, a development that signaled both

the political and physical shift away from the authority of Caesarea (for an overview see Der Nersessian 1947).

In 451, Persian Armenia rebelled against king Yazdigerd II, who attempted to impose Zoroastrianism. This meant that no Armenian bishops attended the Council of Chalcedon, so they were not actually in a position to criticize its findings. If anything, the Armenian hierarchy tended towards compromise initially; the Council of Dvin in 506 approved the *Henotikon*, but the Byzantine church authorities were subsequently condemned at the Second Council of Dvin 555, and any thought of communion with the Greeks declined as the Church moved towards Cyril's formula and the position of the Syrian anti-Chalcedonians. Byzantine political influence remained strong, and during the reign of Maurice (582–602), it reached its greatest extent. However, subsequent Muslim expansion into the Caucasus during the course of the seventh century isolated Armenia politically and put an end to any thought of reconciliation with Byzantium, although it appears that there was still a fairly active Melkite presence in Armenia as late as the tenth century. As Armenians emigrated and spread through Byzantium, so we begin to find sees developing beyond its borders, and at this time Jerusalem particularly was home to a very active Armenian community. The Byzantine Emperor Leo V (r.813–20) was himself of Armenian origin, and Armenian Christian communities were also to be found across central Asia (Dauvillier 1974). Armenia regained some degree of independence in 884 under the Bagratid king Ashot I, but Byzantine armies under Basil II annexed Vaspurkan in 1021–2, and by 1045 all Armenia came again under the aegis of Byzantium. When the last vestiges of Byzantine influence in Armenia were ended by the Turks at the Battle of Mantzikert in 1071, the Armenian state machinery migrated southwestward into southern Anatolia, and here we see the emergence of an independent Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, which soon became involved with the Latin Church during the Crusades: an Armenian delegation was even present at the Council of Florence in 1439. It would be many centuries before Armenia regained its independence in its original homeland; Armenian identity was vested in a large diaspora community, and in its original homeland, Armenians were a subjugated and oppressed people.

During the formative years of Armenian Christianity, its identity was strengthened with the creation of an alphabet to translate key liturgical texts into the vernacular; to this day the Armenian alphabet represents a source of strong national identity and pride. The distinctive script was formulated by Mesrop, an ascetic missionary, who was sent by the Catholikos Sahak to Edessa in 401 to create a new 36-letter alphabet which was based upon Greek. The newly-translated Armenian liturgical texts show more emphasis on borrowings from Syriac rather than Greek, and in some cases emphasize a direct Apostolic origin of Christianity in Armenia via Addai (Thaddeus), the evangelizer of King Abgar of Edessa.

Armenian ecclesiastical architecture is highly distinctive, and shows clear affinities with Persian architectural motifs, as well as obvious Syrian and Byzantine elements (Donabédian 1992). Early longitudinal basilican forms yield, by the ninth century, to the distinctive "cross-in-square" plan centralized-dome churches. Another distinctive motif is the development from the late sixth century of the tetraconch–four apses

surrounding a square central bay (e.g. Jvari). The church of Aghtamar on an island in Lake Van (the seat of the senior Catholikos from 1113) represents the apogee of Armenian Christian architecture; the quatrefoil Holy Cross Church (c.915–21) has a number of superb bas reliefs on the external walls, and a number of "natural" motifs (peacocks, vines) show Persian influence (Der Nersessian 1965). A degree of Syrian architectural influence is clear at Ereruk (c.500) with its twin-towered façade and the distinctive decorative capitals at the palace martyrium at Zvartnots (c.652) while the use of barrel vaulting may be an influence from Anatolia. The emergence of a truly characteristic form of Armenian architecture is best observed at the Church of St Hripsima at Vagharshapat (c.618). The church here is focused upon an octagonal central bay, with four main cross arms extending outwards, the internal angle of each being filled with an apse; a key architectural feature that emerges here is the use of the squinch, a device that allows the placement of a round dome structure onto what is essentially a square architectural space. As a whole, Armenian church architecture is noted for its compactness; unlike the spacious Byzantine church, the Armenian church architects built on a smaller scale, although their expertise was well renowned through Eastern Christendom; an Armenian named Trdat repaired the dome of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in 989.

Other characteristic elements of Armenian Christian material culture should be briefly mentioned here. The use of icons was not extensive (Der Nersessian 1946), and church painting is relatively limited. Armenian Christian expression is best seen in manuscript illumination (Nersessian 2001) and sculpture; the bas reliefs of Aghtamar are a fine example, showing the meeting between secular and ideological power (Jones 1994). Another distinctive feature is the *khatchkar*, a widespread form of free-standing stone stela, often intricately carved, which bears witness to this exceptional tradition of stonework. Elsewhere within the Christian East, Armenian artisans also acquired a reputation as skilled silversmiths and metalworkers, and in major cities such as Jerusalem, where a thriving Armenian quarter still exists, tile making was an important trade. This is seen to good effect in the Cathe ral of St James in Jerusalem (Carswell and Dowsett 1972) and also at churches in the town of New Julfa, Isfahan, Iran, where a large Armenian community was resettled by Shah Abbas in the sixteenth century (Carswell 1968). The Armenians are heirs to a truly rich Christian heritage; they are true survivors, and along with their neighbors, the Georgians, represent a survival of Christianity of high antiquity in a region that has traditionally witnessed extensive physical and social upheaval.

Georgia and Neighboring Areas

Armenia has traditionally dominated, both culturally and economically, the Caucasus region, but we find ancient Christian communities in adjacent regions, most notably in what is now the modern state of Georgia (see Braund 1991 for an overview). According to Eusebios, King Mirian of Iberia (south Georgia, and a key ally of Byzantium) was evangelized by a slave girl from Jerusalem named Nino in around 326 or 337. Nino had cured Mirian's wife of an illness, and in celebration, he built

at his capital Mtzkheta a lavish church. In response to a plea from Nino, Constantinople sent priests to the kingdom, and Mesrops formulated an alphabet to help the translation of ecclesiastical texts in to Georgian. In 370, Rome sent forces to Iberia, and hereafter the kingdom would find itself at the center of the power games between Byzantium and Persia; Mirian was a founder of the Chosroid dynasty which had links to a branch of the Persian Mihranids. Although initially anti-Chalcedonian, the Iberian Church under Catholikos Cyrion I accepted its findings in 608, and Iberia thus began to take a greater role in the Byzantine political and ecclesiastical sphere (Bammel 1998). The influence of Iberia began to be felt across the eastern empire; there was undoubtedly a large presence of Iberian Christians in Jerusalem, and an Iberian monastery was founded in Palestine in the fifth century at Bir el-Qatt by Peter the Iberian, a high-born hostage at the Byzantine court who would go on to become bishop of Maiuma. The Iberian monarchy was abolished by the Persians during the sixth century, and this marked the beginning of centuries of first Persian and then Arab control, although the Iberian kingdom briefly re-emerged in 888 under king Adarnase II.

In northwest Georgia, the kingdom of Lazika was more open to Greek influence being closer to the eastern fringes of the Byzantine Empire on the coast of the Black Sea, and the flavor of Christianity adopted here during the reign of King Tzathius in 522 (who had a Roman wife and received royal regalia from Justinian himself) was more overtly Byzantine. Under the Catholikos Kyprion (c. 585–610) the Georgian Church sided more with Byzantium, but in 541 King Chosroes, the Sassanid (Persian) Emperor, invaded Lazica, but after an intermittent power struggle the Persians finally formally ceded Lazica to Byzantium, thus marking a period of even stronger Byzantine influence, social, cultural and ecclesiastical. Under King Leo in 767–8, the west Georgian kingdom was virtually an independent entity, although retaining strong links with Byzantium. In 1008, west and east Georgia united under King Bagrat III, and autocephaly for the Georgian Church from Antioch was confirmed in 1057. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries we see the true apogee of the independent Georgian kingdom; this period is marked by the construction of exceptionally beautiful Christian architecture, which retained a strong flavor of Byzantium. Georgians established a monastery, Iviron, on Mount Athos, the center of Orthodox monasticism, and the Byzantine liturgy was used widely.

Georgian ecclesiastical architecture mirrors broader Caucasian developments (Chubinashvili 1998); basilicas are the main type of church from the fifth to the eighth centuries, and the trend then develops towards a centralized plan with dome, rather like the Armenian forms. During Bagrat III's time, we see the emergence of a renewed programme of cathedral building reflecting imperial patronage, emphasized in the frescoes within churches. Bagrat's cathedral (1003) was destroyed by the Turks in 1691, but a fine example of early medieval Georgian architecture is best seen at the patriarchal cathedral "of the life-giving pillar" (Sveti-tskhoveli) Mtskheta of 1010–29. In 1222 the Mongols attacked the Caucasus, and this marked the gradual erosion of Georgian independence; the state eventually fragmented and retained a degree of individuality before absorption into the Russian empire in the nineteenth century.

Around the fringes of Georgia, Christian culture was more heavily influenced by Byzantium. In Abkhazia, which, according to tradition had been evangelized by the apostles Andrew and Simon, Byzantine missionaries, acting on the orders of Justinian, had converted the local population and had established in 551 a cathedral at the capital of Pityous-Soteriopolis; Adzharia (southwestern Georgia) provided many soldiers for the Byzantine armies, and missions from Byzantium reached Zichia in the tenth century. In every sense, the Caucasus was the stage upon which Byzantine political and religious machinations were working actively against the anti-Chalcedonians and Muslims, although this could not stop the ultimate triumph of Islam in the surrounding areas.

In the east of the Caucasus, in the area of modern Azerbaijan and Daghestan, there was an independent Albanian state from the first to the sixth century which was evangelized by missionaries from Armenia in the fourth century. According to tradition, Gregory the Illuminator baptized King Unayr, and the state used a modified Armenian alphabet developed by Mesrop himself. Although Albanian written sources have not survived, we have enough extant Armenian accounts that tell us something of the development of a Christian court on the fringes of the Caucasus. In the fifth century Albania had its own Catholikos with a see at Derbent, but in response to raids by pagan Khazars it moved in 522 to Partaw. The Albanians rejected Chalcedon, and when the Georgian Church recanted in 608, the Albanians broke all relations with their neighbors, but paradoxically the political rulers of Albania were, if anything, pro-Byzantine. This protection did not guarantee immunity from the predations of Islam, but although the area came under Muslim control in the eighth century, the Albanian church remained active, leading missionary activity among the neighboring pagan Khazars. The last Catholikos of Albania, Moses, reigned from 983–9, and thereafter the Albanian church died out completely. The Nagorno Karabagh came under the control, at various times, of Armenia, Georgia, and Albania. In the thirteenth century, the Jalalian dynasty here founded the Gandsazar, the monastery seat of the Catholikos of Albania, which would subsequently become a refuge for fleeing Christians as the area became more progressively Islamic after the fourteenth century. Finally, moving from an area of vital strategic interest for Byzantium, we now look East and consider the other half of the Syrian ideological-cultural jigsaw.

The Church of the East (the East Syrian Rite; the Persian Church; the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East)

I turn finally to perhaps the most complex and far-reaching of the non-Chalcedonian Churches, a community now a mere shadow of its former self, yet one which had a massive socio-cultural impact beyond and within the Byzantine world (England 1998; Gillman and Klimkeit 1999; Baum and Winkler 2002). The Christian communities represented by the East Syrian rite are situated firmly in the realms beyond Byzantium, rooted in the lands to the east of its imperial frontiers. In the last centuries of the first millennium, missionaries of the Persian Church of the East, using Syriac as the language of conversion, had penetrated into Arabia to the south and eastwards

along the Great Silk Road trade routes. They had established vigorous missions in central Asia, Tibet and China from their base in Mesopotamia. If historical circumstances had been different, Christianity might have continued as the major religion these areas, but within vast tracts of Asia, Islam ultimately triumphed, and in eastern Asia, traditional religions such as Buddhism and Taoism reasserted themselves.

The Church of the East exists now as a fragmentary community in northern Iraq, southern India and in diaspora communities the world over. The Church developed at the heart of Sassanian political power at the city of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the old Hellenic and Parthian city on the Tigris south of modern Baghdad (Iraq). Although an apostolic origin for the church in Persia under Jude (Thaddeus) and Simon the Zealot has been traditionally described (Baum and Winkler 2002: 11), the presence of Christians beyond the eastern borders of Byzantium was surely a by-product of inter-regional trade and exchange. Phillipas' *Book of the Countries* mentions Christians in Parthia, Persia and Media in the third century, and when Shapur I (240–72) attacked the Roman territories of the east, a large number of Greek-speaking Christians settled in Persia. A very useful historical source, the *Synodikon Orientale,* details the proceedings of thirteen consecutive synods held at Seleucia-Ctesiphon from 410, and provides an excellent overview of the development expansion of the Church of the East over hundreds of years (Chabot 1902). The presence of a formalized Christian administrative structure here probably dates from 424 when Catholikos Dadhiso declared himself patriarch.

Persian clergy were also being sent to train at the important Christian center of Edessa, where they came into contact with the writings of Nestorios. They were also influenced by the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia (also known as Theodore the Interpreter, a Cilician who lived from c.350 to 428), and as a result Persian scholars were much more open to ideas that had been anathematized by the Byzantine Church authorities. When Edessa largely failed to accept the emperor Zeno's conciliatory *Henotikon*, or Edict of Unity, seeking to bring Chalcedonians and Monophysites together, in 482, it was inevitable that a complete rupture from Constantinople would take place. A new academy was established at Nisibis (modern Nuseybin, Turkey) in c.489, a place which would subsequently become an important theological center for the Church of the East. In the late fifth century, Acacios, the Catholikos at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, formally severed relations with the Byzantine Church, but by this time the growth of the Persian Church was phenomenal. By 650, there were an estimated 96 dioceses under its control.

Monasticism was a key component in the growth of the Church. According to tradition, Mar Augin (or Eugenios, d. 370, and a possible former pupil of Pachomios himself) founded a monastery at Mount Itzla near Nisibis, and the movement swiftly developed as a dynamic force within the Church; the Synod of 410 had to reassert control of the monks, who began to attack Zoroastrian cultic centers (Gillman and Klimkeit 1999: 148) Reforms introduced by Abraham of Kaskar (d. 580) returned to a more ascetic tradition, and there was extensive contact with West Syrian tradition in the region of the Tur Abdin in southern Turkey. West Syrian influence was strengthened when in 629 Emperor Heraklios defeated the Persians, and allowed the Syrian Orthodox patriarch Athanasios to establish the office of Maphrian (Metropoli-

tan) "of all Jacobites" (i.e. West Syrian rite Christians) in the Persian province. The Arab conquest of the Persian Empire in 637–51 saw the establishment of an Orthodox hierarchy in Persia in order to minister to the remaining Byzantine populations. Christians generally retained their high-status jobs, and Nisibis became an important center for translation of Greek texts into Arabic. Arguably the Church of the East reached its apogee under patriarch Timothy I (780–823), when it enjoyed good relations with the Arab conquerors. From 775, the Patriarchal See was situated at the new Abbasid capital of Baghdad, and a succession of Christians served as personal physicians to the caliphs.

Beyond Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Persia, the Church, underpinned by a dynamic monastic system, began to expand eastward and southward into Fars and the Persian Gulf. Syriac Christian tombstones from an important monastery at Kharg Island have been dated to the third century AD, and the site itself has yielded a remarkable corpus of early Christian material (Steve 2003). In the fifth century, a mission reached Bahrain, and a bishopric was established at Oman in 424 (Faü 2002; Trimingham 1979: 279ff.). Further south, excavations at the monastery at Sir Bani Yas in the UAE should also yield excellent information on the development of monasticism in the Persian Gulf (King 1997). Further southward again, into Arabia, the major Christian groups competed for converts; Emperor Constantius sent a diplomatic mission to the Himyarites led by a Socotran from an island off South Yemen, named Theophilus (Trimingham 1979: 289), and the Church in what is now Yemen subsequently came under the aegis of the Church at Aksum. Southwestern Arabia was therefore a meeting ground of the missionaries of the "Orthodox" Church of Byzantium, the Church of the East, and Ethiopians from across the Red Sea.

Missionaries from the Church of the East also ranged along the Indian seaboard; according to the apocryphal *Acts of Judas Thomas*, St Thomas had converted the Indian King Gundophorus in AD 52 (Farquhar 1927; in the thirteenth century, Marco Polo claimed to have seen St Thomas's tomb at Mylapore, near Madras). It is possible that Constantius's mission also reached the Maldives and India, and the generally reliable *Christian Topography* of Kosmas Indikopleustes mentions Christians living in Sri Lanka in the sixth century (Mingana 1926). The first Portuguese visitors to the region in the sixteenth century discovered cultural evidence of Christian communities here; distinctive crosses and Christian tombstones were described, and special attention attaches to a granite cross at Mylapore which was engraved with an eighth-century Pahalvi script mentioning "Afras … son of Chaharbukht the Syrian who cut this stone" (Brown 1982: 80). To this day a thriving (if fragmented) Indian Christian community survives on the coast, embracing not only East Syrian/Church of the East but West Syrian (Syrian Orthodox) and Roman Catholic rites.

The Church of the East also reached along the trade routes of the Great Silk Road into central Asia (Hunter 1996). In 424, a bishopric had been established at the important Silk Road trading city of Merv (modern Turkmenistan), which attained metropolitan status in the sixth century, although archaeological evidence for the Christian community is confined to rare cases of cross motifs on coins issued by Yazdigird I (Herrmann 1997; Koshelenko 1995). Samarkand to the northeast also became an important center for expansion among the Turkic peoples. In these

regions, Syriac again was the medium for expansion, and the presence of many Christian inscriptions, tombstones, and in some case churches indicate the success of the missions in Transoxania (Gillman and Klimkeit 1999: 205ff.). Missions penetrated the lands beyond the Oxus and along the southern Silk Routes into east Turkestan, where a number of important Turkic Christian texts were found at Tunhuang (Fujieda 1966). Eighth-century rock carvings of Nestorian crosses have been found at Dran-Tse, Ladakh, in western Tibet (Sims Williams 1993), and in 795 patriarch Timothy I appointed a metropolitan to the country. North of the Tien Shan Mountains Christianity reached the Kerait peoples; Christian tombstones found at Semirice south of Lake Baikash date from the ninth to fourteenth centuries (Chwolson 1897).

East Syrian Christianity ultimately reached China in the seventh century during the T'ang period (Hickley 1980). We know from Chinese historical records that Emperor T'ai-tsung (626–49) decreed in 638 that Christianity could be openly practiced, and we do have a very important piece of archaeological evidence to support these accounts. In 1625 a stela was discovered by Jesuit missionaries at Sian-Fu; this three-meter-high stone was erected, according to its inscription, in 781 to commemorate the arrival of missionary monks here in 635. The main text is in Chinese, but there is a Syriac inscription listing the names of the priests and monks in the party; according to the Chinese text, the name of the first missionary is given as "A-Lo-Pên," who is described as coming from the kingdom of Ta-Ch'in, which could be Syria (Hsü 1986). It is clear that A-Lo-Pên took on an important role within the T'ang court; he was able to teach Christianity with reference to ideas borrowed from Taoist and Buddhist texts, and he was commanded by the Emperor Kao-Tsung (649–83) to found a monastery within every prefecture (Drake 1937). There were, however, occasional persecutions, and the situation came to a head in 845 when Emperor Wu-Tsang closed the Christian monasteries. By the tenth century, an organized Christian presence had all but disappeared from China, although much later, in the seventeenth century, Orthodox missions penetrating southward from Siberia re-established a Christian presence within Imperial China.

The advent of the Mongols, sweeping westward in the thirteenth century under Genghis Khan, changed the social and economic picture in central Asia. By 1243 many parts of Persia were conquered and Europe was threatened. The Mongols did tolerate Christianity, but this picture changed with the advent of Tamerlane in the early fifteenth century, when we finally see the eradication of Christianity in central and eastern Asia (Saunders 1968). The expansion of East Syrian Christianity was swift and effective, yet it was not a politically motivated movement; this was not a "national" Church and it did not enjoy the centrality to secular life that the Church occupied in the Byzantine world. This was very much an independent missionary enterprise.

Conclusion

This survey has covered a vast span of time and space; it is worth emphasizing that apart from their opposition to Chalcedonian Christology, that Byzantine and

self-proclaimed "Orthodox" version of Christianity, few concrete socio-cultural motifs unite the disparate Churches discussed herein. The demands of maintaining a common front have to some extent resulted in some semblance of contact among the different hierarchies to variable degrees, but the non-Chalcedonian Churches do not represent a monolithic bloc. What can we take from this narrative, especially in relation to the central ethos of the current work? First one could suggest that the legacy and contribution of these Churches is largely forgotten and underplayed, a result of Eurocentric early Christian scholarship which tended to view the Mediterranean world as being the prime force in the shaping of Christian identity on the global scale. The study of these Churches, their history, and cultural impact, has been marginalized academically and also in popular imagination. One might suggest that a better understanding of the existence of Christian communities living (for the most part) in happy proximity to large and powerful Islamic communities might have a topical geopolitical message in the current climate.

More specifically, and in relation to the Byzantine world, these Churches were largely a vehicle for popular national resistance against the political power of the Greek-speaking world. The theological debate was arguably a mirror (or perhaps *casus belli*) of latent tensions between Egyptian or Syrian and their Greek masters. In a sense, these Churches were instruments for resistance to Byzantine domination, and this is reflected in a very distinctive indigenous Christian material culture, which, while not monolithic (cf. Mundell 1977), draws heavily upon syncretic elements of local material culture. To take this idea of syncretism a stage further, the Egyptian Copts, for instance, were not merely drawing upon latent social memory when they "borrowed" Pharaonic motifs. These ancient sacred motifs really meant something in terms of shaping an identity and reflecting theological concerns. Another point of departure already alluded to is the notion that, although "national" Churches, they were not greatly subject to political control. Ironically one of the most successful missionary enterprises in history, that of the East Syrian Church, was largely conducted without secular patronage. The missionaries of this Church were able to adapt their message with admirable flexibility to reach out to a vast new audience of potential converts. The development of a global Christianity in the first millennium AD was not tied solely to the framework of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, there were other players at work beyond Byzantium, highly hostile to the so-called "Orthodoxy" represented by the dominance of the Greek world. These were largely Semitic Christianities, dynamic, vigorous, and flexible.

The merits of counterfactual approaches to history have been debated, but in the context of the present section, if circumstances had been only slightly different, then the great Christian cities of Constantinople, Rome, Milan, or Canterbury would now be fringe players in the global Christian world. Our eyes, set on Rome for the Papal election of 2005, would arguably have been fixed instead on Baghdad (or Seleucia-Ctesiphon, as it might still be called) where a new leader of a global Catholic community, its masses spoken in Syriac rather than the Latin of tradition, awaited his call.

FURTHER READING

Baum and Winkler 2003 is a good introduction to the eastern churches. Finneran 2002 deals with the archaeological evidence for Christianity in Africa, and Grierson 1993 looks specifically at art from Ethiopia. For Nubia, Welsby 2002 is a good starting point; see also Edwards 2004; for the Copts, see Meinardus 1999; for Armenia, Nersessian 2001. For discoveries of Manichaean and Nestorian remains in China, see http://www.anchist.mq.edu.au/doccenter/Zayton.htm

PART III

Reading Byzantine Texts

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

No Drama, No Poetry, No Fiction, No Readership, No Literature

Margaret Mullett

It used to be thought that Byzantium was a society without a literature, or that if it had a literature, it was without a readership, without literary merit, without poetry, without fiction. Byzantium has also been characterized as a society without a drama. But recent research has demonstrated that it was a highly performative society with a rich rhetorical literature, with a demanding and critical readership, a sophisticated (though to us surprising) use of prose and verse, and a handling of fiction which goes far beyond the novels or romances of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. This chapter explores some of these preconceptions and complexities.

Drama

"Today almost nobody believes in the existence of a real theatre in Byzantium" (Spadaro 1994). But that Byzantium did not have a drama is not certain (Baldwin 1986). Ancient theaters were used for church councils, the hippodrome for entertainments but not for Greek tragedy or Roman comedy (Roueché 1993), but tragedy (or certain tragedies) continued to form a basis for Byzantine education (Easterling 1997). Greek tragedies were represented on ivories like Iphigeneia on the tenth-century Veroli casket (Beckwith 1962; Hanson in this volume) and Medea in the mid-eleventh-century Pseudo-Oppian manuscript (Spatharakis 2004). Gestures in some manuscripts as late as the ninth-century Khludov Psalter (Bernabò forthcoming) have been seen to indicate awareness of ancient theatrical traditions. Mimes were defended by Chorikios of Gaza (Webb 2006), outlawed by the Council in Trullo, and continue to attract interest afterwards (Tinnefeld 1974), as in the *Life* of Eirene Chrysobalanton, where demons mock Eirene "like mimes" (Rosenqvist 1986). By the turn of the eleventh century, there was a clear fashion for tragedy (Agapitos 1998): Michael Psellos wrote a treatise comparing Euripides with George of Pisidia (Michael Psellos, ed. Dyck 1986). In the early twelfth century, Nicholas Mouzalon's

poem about his abdication from the archbishopric of Cyprus contains passages in stichomythia, dialog in alternate lines of verse (Doanidou 1934), and this awareness of tragedic forms developed into more extensive parodic treatments like the *Katomyomachia*, *the War of cats and mice*, by Theodore Prodromos (Hunger 1968). The twelfth century also saw the composition of little plays complete with protagonists and choros: the *Friendship in exile* of Theodore Prodromos personifies friendship (Grünbart forthcoming); while the *Dramation* of Michael Haploucheir stages the conflict between Tyche and the Muses for the hero, the wise man (Romano 1999). The culmination of this interest is the only Byzantine tragedy, the *Christos Paschon* (Tuilier 1969). It comprises 2,610 iambic lines on the subject of the passion of Christ taken from (in order) *Medea*, *Hippolytos*, *Rhesos*, and the *Bacchae*, plus rather fewer from *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and the *Troades*; there are some quotations from *Prometheus Bound* and from the *Agamemnon*. But the vast majority of the text is drawn from the four plays, and the vast majority is spoken by the Theotokos, the Mother of God, its protagonist. It is attributed in all manuscripts to Gregory of Nazianzos, but, since Hunger (1978: vol. 2, 102–4), it is believed to be a product of the mid-twelfth century, though the authorship and dating remain to be decided.

Drama may also have found its way into certain church festivals, whether on the streets or in church. The only full-scale play we have is the Cyprus Passion Play (Tsangaridis 2001), and it is unclear whether this was influenced by the West, or vice versa. There is also a reference to a dramatization of the ascension of Elijah in a tenth-century traveller's account (Squatitri 2007), and there is a late Byzantine office dealing with the children in the burning fiery furnace, the *Office of the three children (*White forthcoming; Marciniak 2005). This required scene-building in the naos, three soloists who "dance," and an icon angel that descends as the children are saved. Three eyewitness accounts are preserved, and five versions of the *akolouthia*. Whether it represents drama was an issue in the fourteenth century, and still is now. In general, the case has been made for the dramatic performance of hymns, particularly the kontakia of Romanos (Schork 1963), and of dialog-homilies, providing a liturgical context for drama which either grew out of ancient drama (Solomos 1987; Ploritis 1999) or reacted against it (Cottas 1931). For every scholar who takes either view, there is another to criticize them (La Piana 1912, 1936). Definitions of drama can include or exclude the Byzantine examples: "a man walks across an empty space while someone else is watching him" (Brook 1968), or "where the actor speaks in the name of somebody else" (Marciniak forthcoming) would both include Byzantium.

But to look specifically for drama may be a mistake: we should instead look at the way performance suffused Byzantine civilization (Mullett (ed.) forthcoming). Leo the Deacon said that the inhabitants of Constantinople were fonder of spectacle than all other peoples (*History*: Talbot and Sullivan 2005). Liturgy in churches, street processions, ceremony in palaces and private houses, and feasts in monasteries all provided employment for architects, artists, musicians, dancers, and above all the rhetoricians of the empire (see Whitby in this volume). Schools gave training in rhetoric and gesture, and competed against others; students graduated to the theater of lawcourt and religious disputation. Their works were tried out in literary gatherings called

theatra, presided over by emperors or imperial women (Mullett 1984; Magdalino 1993; Grünbart 2007; Gaul forthcoming). Liturgies for the regular Eucharists, monastic hours, and commemorations like the panegyris of a saint combined prayer, hymnography, procession, and homily in large urban churches designed to hold them (Mathews 1971). From the few prescriptive texts we have (Vogt 1935–40; Verpeaux 1966; Mateos 1962–3), we can see that ceremony involved music and dancing as well as feasting and processing, and was to be found in the Great Palace and lesser palaces, but also in the churches, on the streets, in the imperial polo ground (McCabe forthcoming), and in the hippodrome (A. D. E. Cameron 1973, 1976). Punishments (Bjørnholt forthcoming), the arrival of embassies, and the movement of exotic animals (Ševčenko forthcoming) were everyday events. This performance environment has profound implications for literature in Byzantium.

Poetry

Gibbon said of Byzantine authors that "their prose is soaring to the vicious affectation of poetry, their poetry is sinking below the flatness and insipidity of prose" (Gibbon ed. Bury 1907). Poetry in Byzantium is not always easy to detect. Certainly Byzantines wrote, with varying success, in classical meters, but rhythm was all-important in both prose and verse (Lauxtermann 1999). Gibbon was right in that the features we attribute to poetry may appear in Byzantine prose, and that verse is used for what we may regard as very unpoetic functions. For example, letters, of which we have 15,000 in 150 major collections, were expected to be short, emotional, decorated, intense, elegant. They dealt with major human themes like death, love, friendship, and exile, and were expected to reveal the author's soul (Mullett 1981; Hatlie 1996; Papaioannou 2004; Grünbart 2005). These are all functions which can be expected to be fulfilled by poetry in other cultures. But there are also poems of autobiography like Gregory of Nazianzos (Demoen 1996), of intense religious experience like Symeon the New Theologian (Markopoulos 2008; Krueger forthcoming), and about heroic exploits, like the late antique epics, both posthomeric and Nonnian (Mary Whitby 1994), and the heroic poems about the Byzantine frontier revived from the twelfth century (Beaton and Ricks 1993). On the other hand, verse is used for unexpected functions: didactic, ceremonial, and epigraphic. From the long epigram inscribed around the church of St Polyeuktos (Mary Whitby 2006), extolling the imperial credentials of its Theodosian patroness, to the shortest metrical lead seal (Laurent 1931–5), material objects and verse had a symbiotic existence in Byzantium: verse was very visible, and very functional. But hymnography, to take one example, has always had a grudging (Mango 1975) or vainglorious (Topping 1969) press as to whether it is worthy of the term "literature." This applies both to the *kontakia*, verse sermons, of Romanos the Melode (sixth century) with their lush vegetable imagery, developed characterizations, and tensely dramatic structures (de Matons 1977), and to canons, with a very different aesthetic, more in symbiosis with music and with the biblical texts they elaborate and comment on. These were

also, with the bronze (and to a lesser extent gold), coins of the empire, mass media in which emperors or patriarchs could try out new ideas or publicize decrees (Trypanis 1968).

But these functions are not overdetermined in Byzantium: some kinds of writing, like consolation, could come in the form of a prose speech, a letter, or a poem (Littlewood 1999). Homilies could be in simple prose, in heavily rhythmic prose (Hörandner 1981), or in verse (Cunningham and Allen 1998). The novel could be in either prose or verse, or in neither. One function of the Middle Byzantine development of a 14-syllable rhythmic meter, which was to become the national meter of Modern Greece, was as an *ametros metros*, a form of discourse which was neither prose nor verse. This, together with the sophisticated metrical form of the *kontakion*, each one specific to the poem itself, and the apparent ability of Middle Byzantine poets to write verse which both scanned aurally in terms of meter and on parchment conformed to classical scansion (Lauxtermann 1999), suggests that Byzantine writers saw verse as a way of demonstrating learned skills, a weapon to be deployed in the interests of effective and powerful communication of emotion and religious feeling as well as pragmatic communication.

Fiction

Fiction has a date in Byzantium, though it is much debated. The revival of the ancient novel in the mid-twelfth century has long been hailed as "the revival of fiction." Three complete novels (two in verse, one in prose) and one fragmentary example in *politikos stichos* are dated in various different orders to the 1140s and later (Beaton 1996). Like the novels of the second sophistic, which were much read in Byzantium (MacAlister 1996), they describe the fortunes of a pair or more of lovers who are separated by events and are finally reunited. They include speeches, poems, dream-narratives, and letters (Agapitos and Reinsch 2000). Two more groups from the thirteenth century onward include romances translated from Western languages and others specific to Byzantium. Some deal with the period of the Trojan War, others with a fairy-tale or Greek city-state past (Jeffreys 1983).

But other forms of narrative also have fictional elements: Todorov, after all, defined as fiction anything which told a story as if it were fiction (Todorov 1990). Byzantine writers of history were very aware of the twin tasks of a historian to purvey the truth and to tell a good story, and writers of different kinds of history (world chronicle, classicizing history, ecclesiastical history) balanced these two tasks in different ways, sometimes criticizing bitterly predecesssors who they thought had got the mix wrong (Scott 1981 and in this volume). Historiography was governed by the rhetorical demands of *diegesis*, however, which ensured that a persuasive story with all the trimmings of speeches and letters was the most important aim. Byzantinists have generally suggested (on spurious grounds) that historiography was the greatest (Runciman 1995) and even the most numerous (Scott 2009) achievement of Byzantine writers (Odorico 2006; Macrides 2008).

A third major narrative form in Byzantium, the saint's life, also had a close relation to fiction, as the Bollandists, Jesuit scholars devoted to the critical study of saints' lives, saw: their task was to weed the chaff from the straw and present truly credible saints for the Church (Delehaye 1920). Apocryphal acts which told of the missions of St Paul and Thekla (Bremmer 1996), and indeed apocryphal gospels, which filled out the gaps in the gospel narratives between the birth and ministry of Christ and from the end of the *Acts of the Apostles* to the *Koimesis*, or death, of the Virgin (*Apocryphal New Testament*), recounted events necessary for Christian understanding, without necessarily representing historical accuracy. This set the tone for hagiography throughout the Byzantine centuries. The accounts of the trial and combat of martyrs during various persecutions offer vivid characterizations and stirring dialog as well as exciting miracles, in which persecutors get their deserved comeuppance (Musurillo 1972). The lives of saints which succeeded them offered models for emulation of perfect human lives in various walks of life—bishop, doctor, soldier, housewife, stylite—and various genders—man, woman, eunuch (Constantinou 2005). They contain engrossing temptations, engaging miracles, direct speech, sometimes recipes or jokes. They may give us more information than the narrator should be able to know (Rosenqvist 1986) or fit too neatly into a predetermined agenda (Odorico 2004), but in these cases, it can be seen that an invented life might be just as effective as an authentic one. Lives were necessary for commemoration of the saint at his or her feast day, which was an opportunity for the cult site to accrue capital, to strengthen the resolution of the faithful in times of persecution, to show to emperor and bureaucracy the usefulness of saints for the running of the empire, and to demonstrate the sanctity of the subject for emulation by the faithful as they heard them in the cathedral liturgy day by day in the Orthodox year. They were read silently in private houses, aloud in monasteries, and declaimed in church. They, with the novel and historiography, form part of the great storytelling tradition of Byzantium which is celebrated in John Moschos's *Pratum Spirituale*, or *Spiritual Meadow*, where the author and his friend, the patriarch, travel round the monasteries of the Near East and are taken in, fed, watered, and told stories (*Spiritual Meadow*, Wortley 1992).

These are the three fundamental genres of modern literature: the novel, poetry, and drama, and it is clear that Byzantium has very largely been judged by conformity to this modern norm. If these modern genres do not exist in Byzantium, or if their use is strange to us, or if Byzantine achievement is adjudged bad in our terms, it has been assumed that there is no literature in Byzantium, or possibly only a bad one.

Deciding what is literature is one of the hardest tasks of any literary scholar, and need not involve aesthetic evaluation by modern readers (*DOP* 1999), though Byzantinists have traditionally felt it their duty to add another pejorative judgment to the pile. In the twentieth century, it was particularly professors of Byzantine language and literature who felt the need to defend their own taste by criticizing Byzantine achievement (e.g. Jenkins 1940). The change came very slowly, though it was accelerated by the second inaugural lecture of Cyril Mango (Mango 1975). In 1930, Sykutres suggested that Byzantine letters might even have outclassed the classical letters that preceded them (Sykutres 1932). In 1969–70, Herbert Hunger offered an alternative aesthetic of imitation and emulation which echoed recent work in

classics on creative imitation. In 1973, George Kustas showed that all Byzantine rhetoric depends on a knowledge of rhetoric which underlay all education and literary composition. In the 1970s, Antony Littlewood and Emily Albu Hanawalt made the case for Byzantine literature and problematized the issue of evaluation (Hanawalt 1986; Mullett 1990). George Dennis offered one of the last examples of blame and then made a generous repentance (Dennis 1977, 1997). Paul Magdalino argued that Byzantine literature was far closer to everyday life than had previously been thought, particularly by Mango (Magdalino 1991). Margaret Alexiou included Byzantium in her *longue durée* treatment of Greek lament, though not, unfortunately, rhetoric (Alexiou 1974). It was only with the appearance of Alexander Kazhdan on the scene that the picture drawn by academics of an unchanging Byzantine literature, supported by the prevalent use of scholarly Handbücher, which separated popular literature from learned, and church literature from both, all organized by genre, began to change by embracing the notion of change (Kazhdan and Epstein 1985). Kazhdan's historical sense saw literature as reflecting and influencing culture in a dynamic relationship within Byzantium. When he worked with art historians (e.g. Kazhdan and Cutler 1982), it was possible for literary study to interact with art history, and for literature to take its place in a sense of Byzantine culture which was not dominated only by art; this work set the scene for important considerations of the relationship of art with literature, or text with image (already Maguire 1981; most recently James 2007). It was Kazhdan also who saw the need for a true history of Byzantine literature (Kazhdan 1999), and Christine Angelidi who ensured that two volumes of his saw the light of day (Kazhdan 2006). A Cyprus meeting in 2000 (Odorico and Agapitos 2002) considered the need for such histories, and they have begun to appear (Rosenqvist 2007); others are in production by individuals but the most urgent need is for a collaborative history of Byzantine literature, like the many Cambridge histories of literature. By 1997, it was clear that alternative approaches to Byzantine studies were available and were surveyed in an issue of *Symbolae Osloenses* (Ljubarskij 1998); the dichotomy between "Quellenforschung" and "literary criticism" is perhaps more properly formulated in terms of the applications of the tools of philology and literary theory.

In all this, from the beginning, from Hunger and Kustas, it was clear that the main desideratum was to write the Byzantine theory of literature which does not survive in Byzantine treatises, to determine how we know what Byzantines liked, how we know literature evolved, how we know whether individuals achieved success or failure. Certain texts do help us (Agapitos and Mortensen forthcoming): the *Bibliotheca* of Photios is a set of book reviews (Photios: Wilson 1994); Psellos's treatises on Euripides and George of Pisidia, and on Heliodoros and Achilles Tatios (Michael Psellos: Dyck, 1986) involve aesthetic judgment. And certain handbooks of rhetoric were for practical use either in training the young in rhetoric, as was the case with the *progymnasmata* or preliminary school exercises (Webb 2001 and 2009), or as on-the-job manuals like Menander Rhetor (Menander: Russell and Wilson 1981) or the *Typoi epistolikoi* (Weichert 1910), which dealt respectively with particular public or private speeches (to the emperor, birth, marriage, death, arriving at and departing from places), and with letters of every kind. The *progymnasmata* help us understand the

principles involved in certain tools of writing, in narrative (*diegesis*) or characterization (*ethopoiia*) or description (*ekphrasis*): they show us that *ekphraseis* of works of art are not supposed to allow us to reconstruct them (Mango 1963; Maguire 1974), but to act as aids in narrative to bring them (or events, or people, or places) vividly before the eye—a very different function (Webb 1999a and b; James and Webb 1991; Agapitos and Hinterberger 2006; Webb 2009). Menander allows us to see how writers deployed *topoi* in works which would not immediately be thought of as rhetorical: *adventus* material (MacCormack 1981) appearing in a *kontakion* (Topping 1977), *basilikos logos* material (Dennis 1997) in hagiography (Vinson 2003).

Readership

The argument about Byzantine readership is an even more complex one than that dealing with Byzantine literature itself. Lemerle (1960) argued that it was a "littérature sans public et sans problèmes;" Jenkins (1963) that "no secular literature was written for a wide public, since no such public existed." Mango (1975) suggested that there was a literary class isolated from the rest of society. Beck (1974) argued that writers were fully integrated members of the bureaucracies of Church and State. The authors of *Books and bookmen in Byzantium* (1975) posited a very small reception for Byzantine literature. A figure of 600 literati at any one time capable of appreciating the great works of the period has been passed on from secondary work to secondary work (Lemerle 1971). These literati were of course male, with very few exceptions (Rochow 1967; Gouma-Peterson 2000; Constantinides Hero 1986). There is no question that Byzantine literature was read: the large number of manuscripts for various works, commentaries on them, quotation and mimesis of other Byzantine works, the practice in the late Byzantine period of producing *metaphraseis*, translations of texts at a lower level of style for easy reading (Hunger 1981), all attest to that. The question is by how many people was literature read, or was it that authorship and readership presented two sides of the same coin? (See also Waring in this volume.)

Browning attempted to answer this question by determining the level of literacy in the empire. He was not a fan of Byzantine literature: he described the literature of the Komnenian period as "an age of uncreative erudition, of sterile good taste" (Browning 1975). Time has modified this judgment as we now realize that, possibly with the sixth century, this was the period *par excellence* of creativity and experiment, with the revival of satire and the novel, the emergence of *politikos stichos* and literary works in the vernacular. But Browning's work on literacy, arguing for a wider functional literacy than in comparable societies (McKitterick 1990; Franklin 2002), opened up new debates (Mullett 1990; A. M. Cameron 1994; Holmes and Waring 2002). Female and lay literacy may be more common in Byzantium than in the medieval West, clerical illiteracy far commoner. A project led by Nikos Oikonomides (Oikonomides 1997) attempted to quantify literacy through looking at the orthography of the originals of monastic documents. This, sadly uncompleted, project would have had various questions to answer: did the Byzantines care about spelling (one wonders after reading

inscriptions on works of art)? How typical were monasteries in the context of literacy? Was there regional variation? Was signing with a cross a literacy practice in Byzantine eyes? But Oikonomides had already demonstrated (Oikonomides 1983) that the use of a "usual lead seal" was a literacy practice which might not have gone hand-in-hand with the ability to write rhetoric or read imperial decrees.

Another approach to this question is the importance of orality in Byzantium. Books were read aloud, most kinds of literature were performed, and an oral version may have preceded the written text. Reception of any one text may have taken place at different levels in different settings: getting the plot and the message, enjoying characterization and verbal color, appreciating elements of wordplay and parody available only to other literati. These could involve hearing the original delivery, getting hold of a text and hearing it retold, or read privately in a study, or they could all be achieved by parts of the same audience. And it is likely that aural reception facilitated understanding of passages which would have been difficult to receive visually. Alongside this performative certainty, and partaking in it (Papalexandrou 2007), we must also be aware that Byzantines, at least urban Byzantines, were surrounded by the written word on public buildings, wall paintings, placards, circulating broadsheets, in processions in church (Roueché 2006). It was part of their world.

Education was decreasingly available as the student progressed (Cribiore 2001). Primary-level education across the provinces, studying grammar from Homer, led to a training in rhetoric in fewer centers (Markopoulos 2000), until the highest level of teaching was available only in Constantinople. The specialization of the Early Byzantine Empire (philosophy in Athens, law in Beirut, rhetoric in Gaza) died with the great cities. The literati of the Middle Byzantine period bewailed ever leaving the capital (Mullett 1997). The acquisition of rhetoric was vital for the production of literature but probably not for its reception: the hymns and homilies we have seen as mass media; literary aspects of ceremony, public religious polemics, chants of the circus factions at the hippodrome, panegyrics of saints in candlelit festivals, tales told by monk to visitor, all could be received without benefit of rhetoric. So it could be argued that Byzantine literature was formed by rhetoric, but that a rhetorical education was not necessary to receive it, that there was in fact a Byzantine literary public wider than the *theatra* of the capital or the combined number of writers and patrons.

Some kinds of writing were perhaps received only by the rhetorate, though the rhetoricity might have been at different levels: various kinds of learned treatises, commentaries, *didaskaliai*, and the staples of the *theatron*, *dramatia*, improvised *progymnasmata*, satire and parody. But in general, it seems more helpful to look at Byzantine literature in terms of performance content and context, and in terms of form. Many works were interactive, composed in the present. Advice in council to the emperor, a religious polemic or a speech in court might expect immediate response in terms of a rebuttal. Of these, enormous numbers of polemics (A. M. Cameron 2003; Kolbaba 2000), very little dikanic rhetoric (Macrides 2000) and only written-up advice literature (Roueché 2002) has survived. Epideictic, whether a speech to the emperor, or a speech on the death of a relative, could, by virtue of its display quality, be in verse or epistolary form. All of these might be delivered, and might attract immediate response, indeed should attract emotional response; but only the letter by

its form would expect a literary reply, and that perhaps not immediate. Hymns might be interactive, in terms of a refrain, and the participation of different *psalteis*; the homily was *ex cathedra* but enclosed in the interactive form of the liturgy. In a story-telling or dream-explaining context, one story might attract another.

Other kinds of writing were backward looking and written to be received at a distance and applied to the future. History, hagiography, and heroic poetry might all be delivered orally, perhaps in a family gathering, during lunch in a *trapeza* (monastic refectory) or after dinner at an aristocratic feast, but they required no response. Emotional response, reflection, and emulation were the inscribed modes of reception for all. And they could equally be read visually in private to achieve the latter two responses. Additional literacy practices were involved in preparing material for aural or visual reception: the pruning of saints' lives for the right length for an appropriate liturgical book (Høgel 2002), or the process of collection and selection for a *florilegium* (Wortley 1994), in which the reader could wander aimlessly and find wisdom wherever the eye should light.

Other literary strategies were forward looking: the rich parainetic material written for emperors, or by fathers for children, suggested above all advice for the future despite other, praise or autobiographical, accretions. Apocalypses (Baun 2007), ascetic anthologies (Duffy 1999) and katanyktic confessions (Giannouli 2009) looked to the Last Judgement; dream books, and other works of occult science, looked to the traps awaiting the unwary in life. Whether delivered orally or not, they were meant to be read and absorbed, and lives were to be changed accordingly. Even inscriptions in public buildings might have been performed orally, and one kind of epitaph in particular implies conversation between traveler and deceased (Goldhill 1994), though of all kinds of writing, the visual response was most important in the epigram. Though commissioned from a writer, its execution made it part of the object whose response was primarily aesthetic and visual. Epigrams look forward and back, and in the moment of reading, the most immediate of all Byzantine literature. They demonstrate the importance of patronage in Byzantine literary production, and the ability of literature to transcend the needs of the patron (Hörandner and Grünbart 2003).

Two more subtle arguments, however, suggest (a) that all Byzantine literature was written for a purpose, and (b) that there is a subliterary level, at which authors who were unable to write prose like Demosthenes or verse in meter like Callimachus could still compose some works. The first would suggest to a modern reader that Byzantine literature was no such thing, since literature (it is often believed) is what we write without utilitarian purpose. The second could be used to show that educated literature is recognizable to a classicist and therefore literature, or alternatively that the subliterary was more spontaneous and so authentic, and thus literature. The reality was rather different.

Reading Byzantine literature is difficult: it requires a knowledge of Byzantium. Just because "no literature can be read for pleasure alone" (Jenkins 1940; Mango 1975), even if it were true, it does not mean that Byzantines wrote all their literature, their privileged text, for a purpose. It has recently been argued that we should read Byzantine text always at two levels: at the level of posterity, aimed at by writers learned in rhetorical art, *rhetorike techne*, and at a more immediate, functional level (Odorico

forthcoming). While there are difficulties with this view, for example that there was no such thing as pure entertainment in Byzantium (Angelidi forthcoming), it is a working assumption that allows us to date texts, to make room for them in a cultural context. And some texts lend themselves particularly to this view. The two hymns by Romanos on the Forty Martyrs appear to be timeless celebrations of a night of superhuman bravery: one also served as part of the celebration of the *enkainia* of a church holding the relics; the other as part of the ceremony of the *profectio bellica* at the time of the invasion of Bulgars in the 550s (Mullett forthcoming a). And two poems of abdication from an episcopal see can be seen as act of resignation, and as revenge against enemies, as well as autobiographical sketches (Mullett 2009). Very little Byzantine literature which has survived is other than functional, or other than rhetorically decorated. Lists of castles (as in Prokopios's *Buildings*) or assorted ethnographical accounts (as in the *De administrando imperio*) are incorporated into works of *enkomion* or *parainesis*; seating plans at imperial banquets (Oikonomides 1972) and charters transferring land grants (*Archives de l'Athos*) or setting up monasteries (Thomas and Hero 2000) are decorated with elegant *prooimia* (Hunger 1964; Browning 1966). All of this brings us to the subliterary.

The closest word for literature as used by the Byzantines is *logoi*, "words," which also, revealingly, means "learning." The Byzantines who thought about these things expected texts to be executed at the highest rhetorical level possible that was suitable for the kind of writing, though they might choose to read similar works as translated downwards in a *metaphrasis* (Hunger 1981). Works which did not meet this standard were burnt (like the *Life* of St Paraskeve at the hands of patriarch Nicholas Mouzalon, 1147–51) and/or translated upwards (Høgel 1996). Religious works were just as subject to these concerns, perhaps more so, since clerical literacy or rhetoricity could not be taken for granted, and religious writing was in some way an act of piety (Krueger 2004). Genres of writing, however, required different levels of language and rhetoric for the different kinds of writing (Mullett 1992): a speech to an emperor was very different from a simple autobiographical poem; a story about a desert father was very different from an elaborate letter about book exchange. Byzantines were very skilled at balancing all these needs: they also managed to write in a language which aimed to be indistinguishable from the Athenian masters of the fourth century BC, but which in its spoken form had changed considerably. When, in the twelfth century, authors of the highest achievement and fame began to write certain kinds of texts (satire, begging poetry, an appeal from prison) in something which grammatically and syntactically resembled the spoken language, they also evolved a literary form of it with spectacular coinages and brilliant wordplay (M. Jeffreys 1974). They were able to write (we have seen) in meters recognizable to Homer and Callimachus in poems which scanned for use in the street. This can be assumed for most of what has survived in the genres discussed above, a remarkable self-control of language, meter, and rhetoric. Such authors were able also to balance the demands of secular and religious literature to create sometimes a surprising effect or to meet a different audience. Again, awareness of the *topoi* allowed striking effects. Originality was not an aim of Byzantine writers (Littlewood 1995): what they aimed for, like their

classical predecessors (West 1979), was learned and creative imitation. The ability to combine lines and half-lines from four Euripidean tragedies to create a Byzantine tragedy was not plagiarism but genius.

An earlier generation of scholars, however, looked for literature which was fresh, personal, untouched by rhetoric, and found very little. This quest explains the attraction to modern scholars (see for example Alexiou 2002) of *Digenes Akritas* (Théologitis 2004), particularly in the Escorial version (Jeffreys 1998), of folksong (Beaton 1980), of hymns, of works of vernacular experiment, of the poem of confession of a matricide and cannibal (Macrides 1985), of some satire (Alexiou 1982–3 and 1986), of the stories collected in *gerontika*. All might have been produced at a lower level of education than that of the least competent mandarin literati of the capital. Byzantines might have agreed with their selections but for different reasons: it is important to realize that literary criteria other than this brilliant balancing act of past and present, high, middle, and low sometimes came into play. Occasionally it is possible to find a text which reads to the classically educated as incompetent, with no charming vernacular features, and yet is highly sophisticated and innovative at a level of construction and narrative, which suggests that Byzantine storytelling had an aesthetic of its own. The *Diegesis Merike*, which is seldom read as a literary text at all, is the closest we come to an epistolary narrative, and combines multiple first-person narrators with letters and documents, in a frame narrative with episodes and a denouement (Mullett forthcoming b). In a monastic milieu this may have been valued highly: in Constantinople it would have been another matter, which perhaps explains why we have no other texts of this kind.

We have seen that Byzantine literature was not homogeneous, that it was produced sometimes in places other than Constantinople, though between the age of the great cities and the late Byzantine city-state, this was exceptional. It also underwent change over the twelve hundred years of its history, sometimes disguised by the dominant aesthetic of mimesis and Atticism. The historical forms of the early period changed into a more rough and ready distinction between autoptic and synoptic history (Mullett 2006); *kontakion* gave way to canon around Iconoclasm, and both were unnecessary from the eleventh century (Wellesz 1961); hagiography disappeared in the twelfth century and reappeared in the fourteenth (Magdalino 1981). The major watersheds of the "dark age" (c.650–790) and the Latin conquest (1204–61) disrupted to different degrees the literary production of the empire. But we have seen drama, poetry, fiction, literary society, and many different receptions of a very varied literature.

All that this demonstrates is that in any society the place of literature is different and needs to be determined and defined in the terms of that society itself. We may, for example, think that rhetoric is bad because it is dry and artificial, unspontaneous and far removed from the lives and utterances of ordinary people (unless it is the bridegroom's speech, which we think of as extended stand-up, or an inauguration address, in which case we call it oratory); Plato thought rhetoric was bad because it was partial (Vickers 1989); the dominant aesthetic of Byzantium saw it as necessary commentary on the human lifecycle and the careers of individuals, a way to manage

and showcase emotion (Hinterberger 2006 and in this volume), though sometimes unavailable and replaced by an alternative aesthetic. Byzantine literature is very different from our own. But then, so was Byzantium.

FURTHER READING

For drama, Marciniak 2004 and Webb 2009; for poetry Lauxtermann 2003; and for fiction Nilsson 2001 and Agapitos and Mortensen forthcoming are good places to start. On rhetoric, anything by Webb, on letters, Grünbart and Papaioannou, and on epigrams, Hörandner are always stimulating. Averil Cameron's books on Agathias and Prokopios are models of works on single authors. The EHESS *Dossiers byzantins* series, edited by Paolo Odorico, publishes the Hermeneia colloquies on Byzantine literature and is always useful. The Handbücher are still essential reference material; for an excellent survey see A. Littlewood on literature in Harris 2005: 133–46.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Rhetorical Questions

Mary Whitby

In the mid-1060s, Michael Psellos, scholar, statesman, historian, man of letters—in fact one of the brightest luminaries of the entire Byzantine era—composed a work, *On Rhetoric*, in fifteen-syllable political verse (a recognized didactic medium: M. Jeffreys 1974) addressed to an emperor. It appears to be part of a teaching program, which also includes poems on religion, grammar, and law, devised for the emperor, Michael VII Doukas, who would have been in his early teens at this time. The editor, Westerink (1992: 103–22), and a recent analyst, Walker (2001), saw that the work is a synopsis of four rhetorical texts associated with Hermogenes (c.160 to c.230), *On Staseis* (or *Issues*, arguments for deliberative or judicial cases), *On Invention, On Types of Style* (or *Ideas*) and *On the Method of Forcefulness*. Walker argues that, while the other three texts are given summary, at times even cursory, treatment, *On Invention*, a text dealing with the parts of a political speech not now thought to be an authentic work of Hermogenes is analyzed much more fully and even expanded with new examples from the fourth-century church fathers Gregory of Nazianzos and John Chrysostom as well as from Psellos's own writings. It seems that this was the text Psellos considered to be of most practical use in his own world. Another synopsis, perhaps written a century later by John Tzetzes, devotes more attention to *On Staseis* (Walker 2001: 15).

This work offers a convenient introduction to key issues in Byzantine rhetoric: (1) it remained central to the educational system through all periods; (2) it was based on a very small corpus of handbooks, most dating from late antiquity; (3) it was taught because it continued to be of practical use; and (4) emphasis might be adjusted by succeeding generations in line with evolving interests and needs. While the first two statements have long been agreed, the others have emerged from more recent case-studies that have signaled the dynamism of this unfashionable yet crucial topic. A focal point of modern studies is the desire to understand why and how rhetoric held its central position in the late-antique and Byzantine world and to appreciate the range and depth of its penetration. This represents a significant enrichment of

earlier groundwork which classified the material by author (Krumbacher 1897: 450–98) and by genre (Hunger 1978: 63–196), and provided a chronological survey of its development (e.g. Kennedy 1983). A recent rich and lively account (E. Jeffreys 2007) charts the cultural and educational context of Byzantine rhetoric and its tools—the commentaries and handbooks—then surveys surviving examples (showpieces, practical examples and rhetorical set-pieces embedded in historiography, hagiography, and novels), as illuminated by recent scholarship. While the great pioneers of Byzantine studies established patterns, themes, and continuities in the bewildering, voluminous, and often poorly edited output of the long Byzantine era, recent decades are characterized by close readings combined with broader contextualization. The keynote, as exemplified in the Psellos case, is of creative originality and reiterated rejuvenation within a strong mimetic tradition: the tools acquired through basic education provide only the starting-point for individual innovation. Rhetoric provided a language, a structure, a norm, a basis for sophisticated exploitation, which is revealed once the surface is probed and specific examples properly analyzed and located. In what follows I will illustrate some of the ways in which this worked.

What is Byzantine Rhetoric?

It is a fine point to decide whether "Byzantine" or "rhetoric" has the more pejorative associations. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* glosses "Byzantine" as "complicated, inflexible, underhand," adjectives which we might equally apply to "rhetoric." The latter term suggests words without substance, an elaborate linguistic paraphernalia artfully concocted to obscure any elements of meaning or fact, obfuscation, a literary game for dilettantes intended to exclude the common mortal, and so on. But this is an extreme perspective. At the other end of the scale, "rhetoric" is linked etymologically not only to the noun denoting a formal speech (*rhesis*) but to a very common verb (*erô*) meaning "I shall say": in other words it is fundamental to every kind of spoken or written communication. It is "the art of arranging words and arguments to the most persuasive effect" and the rules for so doing (E. Jeffreys 2003b: 1). A rhetor is one who educates the young in his art, frequently by his own exemplary performance. Recent work (e.g. Mullett 2003) stresses that performance is crucial: Byzantium functioned as an oral society with literacy limited to a tiny élite. Every kind of formal communication, celebration, commemoration, entertainment, whether secular or religious, public or private, entailed rhetorical performance, from the highest imperial and religious procedures to provincial, urban and household rituals.

The vitality and centrality of rhetoric are lost to us. What survives are the written-up, polished and largely elitist testimonies and the rule-books for creating them, the reliquaries and skeletons of a sensitive and versatile medium. We are obliged to use these materials as a basis for discussion, though they are a pale shadow of a vibrant and vital constituent of Byzantine social intercourse. But we cannot hope to understand the Byzantines, their thought-processes and broader *mentalité*, unless we can decode these materials, by striving to understand rather than to denigrate their rhetorical underpinning. Our contemporary term for rhetoric is "spin," the doctoring

of information and communication to present a particular angle, whether through the speeches of political and religious leaders, communications via the media, or local and private celebrations, commemorations and rituals. The essence of rhetoric is performance and presentation, not literary embellishment, and rhetoric is an element in a wider visual communication system. Far from being a "tyrannical mastery" (Hunger 1978: 65) or a "canker in the cultural blood of the Byzantines" (Nicol 1979: 47), it was a "key element of Byzantine *Weltanschauung*" (Kustas 1973: 1), "the vital lubricant for the entire machinery of government" (Magdalino 1993: 336), even Byzantium's "cultural bloodstream" (Mullett 2003: 170).

An Education in Rhetoric

Not every teenager who advanced to tertiary education in Byzantium was fortunate enough to have a Psellos compose a personalized course-book for him, but this final stage of the curriculum, in which rhetoric was the predominant item and to which only the most able and affluent could aspire, was very much a matter of individual enterprise. The distinction between the rhetor's training and that of the *grammatikos* or secondary teacher was that the student now advanced from reading and grammar to writing and speaking (Webb 2001: 289), thus acquiring the skills to pursue a career in administration or government, the church, or teaching. As today, the student would generally have to travel to one of the centers of learning where in the early period he could pay to study with a rhetor such as Libanios in Antioch, Zacharias of Gaza in Alexandria, Themistios in Constantinople, or Prokopios (not the historian) in Gaza. From time to time in Early and Middle Byzantium we hear of established state-funded chairs of rhetoric in the capital, under Theodosios II in 425, again in the 1040s under Constantine IX Monomachos, but the system focused around individual private teachers and personal recommendation. Centralization seems to have increased in the late period, in the twelfth century when education was controlled by the so-called Patriarchal School (Magdalino 1993: 327f.; Constantinides 2003: 41), in thirteenth-century Nicaea under the Laskarids, and after the return to the capital in 1261 (Constantinides 2003: 42–5; E. Jeffreys 2007: 169; Macrides 2007: 8f., 12–14, 192–4; A. M. Cameron 2006a: 142–3), but by this period the empire was much reduced in size. Our knowledge is patchy and dependent on surviving sources: the voluminous writings of men like Libanios, Psellos, and thirteenth-century scholars and teachers such as George of Cyprus; scattered references in hagiography and historiography (Webb 1994: 82–4); together with newly exploited papyrus archives for the early period; and the surviving textbooks and handbooks.

Traditionally scholarship has stressed the static nature of rhetorical education for two main reasons: the continuing use of a few standard textbooks—Hermogenes, the *progymnasmata* or preliminary exercises preserved in the handbooks of Theon, Aphthonios and their successors, and the two treatises on epideictic rhetoric ascribed to Menander Rhetor—and the continuing use, at least until the twelfth century, of Attic Greek as the language of instruction and performance, a literary language far removed from everyday speech, that had to be painfully learnt (E. Jeffreys 2007:

168). In addition, surviving model exercises, composed for example, by Aphthonios and Libanios often take their themes from myth and fable, remote from the contemporary world: "What would Ajax have said when Odysseus was awarded the arms of Achilles?", "The case of the reformed prostitute," and so on.

But recent case-studies, such as the Psellos text from which I began, demonstrate both the flexibility and the evolution of this material. The preliminary exercises or *progymnasmata* are superficially very similar in their accounts of a set of increasingly challenging exercises, beginning from fable (*mythos*) and simple narrative (*diegesis*)—though Theon favored beginning with the *chreia*, or saying (Cribiore 2001: 223), and advancing through praise (*encomium*), comparison (*synkrisis*), *ethopoiia* (or characterization), and *ekphrasis* (detailed description), the last two being especially practiced, to the discussion of a general issue (*thesis*) and the proposal of a law. But closer scrutiny reveals subtle developments, geared to changing needs. Theon's handbook, written in the first century, was devised for the teacher's use and privileged the argumentation needed for judicial oratory (Webb 2001), but with the decline of judicial oratory in the imperial period, epideictic or display oratory came to the fore in later works like that of Aphthonios, which became the standard handbook in the Byzantine period. While *ekphrasis* features in the earliest handbooks, it is only in the fifth century, in the collection of Nikolaos, that *ekphrasis* is explicitly linked to works of art, the form with which we now most commonly associate it (Kennedy 2003: 167; Webb 2000: 67 n. 2), and which of course in literary practice goes back to Homer's description in the *Iliad* of the shield of Achilles.

Aphthonios's handbook includes worked examples for each category, perhaps under the influence of his teacher Libanios, who provided his own models for students, as also did his thirteenth-century counterparts Theodore Hexapterygos, George of Cyprus, and George Pachymeres (Constantinides 2003: 48). A recent study (Cribiore 2007a; also Heath 2004: 217–54) exploits the vast and varied corpus of Libanios—display speeches, letters, orations—against the background of other fourth-century schools and with due regard to conventional elements in ancient letter writing to delineate the nuts and bolts of Antiochene student life: recruitment, initial assessment, the curriculum, (often short) length of study and future career-paths. The correspondence of a tenth-century Constantinopolitan secondary-school teacher provides some remarkable parallels for Libanios's picture—problems with parents, with rival teachers and with the students themselves, and difficulty in getting paid, but in this school some of the teaching was done by the actual students themselves, and Christian texts were among the teaching materials (Markopoulos 2000; Lemerle 1986: 286–96), while in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *progymnasmata* exercises might have religious themes, but rivalries between teachers continued (Constantinides 2003: 48–52).

The bare bones of the *progymnasmata* have been further fleshed out by exploitation of the rich papyrus evidence from Egypt (Morgan 1998: 198–226; Cribiore 2001), which shows interesting variations in recognized patterns for the early period: there students composed *progymnasmata* in verse rather than the usual prose (Cribiore 2001: 229–30), while one sixth-century codex contains a rhetorical manual arranged in question-and-answer format (Cribiore 2007b: 53), a widely employed

and understudied teaching technique for many disciplines in late antiquity and Byzantium (Papadoyannakis 2006; Webb 1994: 85). Above all the papyri provide samples of education in action at an everyday level, the efforts of the less talented as well as the literary elite, an indication of how the theoretical instructions of handbooks were realized in practice. These exercises provided a framework for thinking and argumentation that suited mixed abilities (Cribiore 2001: 223) and evolved according to changing needs.

Psellos's paraphrase attests the endurance in Byzantium of Hermogenes' rhetorical works, but his preference for the text *On Invention* is unusual: the works *On Issues* and *On Ideas* were more widely read (E. Jeffreys 2003b: 2). Hermogenes and Aphthonios are linked in the manuscript tradition and both were copied and attracted commentaries in the middle Byzantine period in particular (ninth to eleventh centuries), but remained prominent into the Palaiologan era (Constantinides 2003: 41). Worked examples of Aphthonian exercises were made by teachers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (E. Jeffreys 2007: 171). As with the various editions of the *progymnasmata* in the early period, these works testify to creativity within established tradition, although many still await proper scrutiny. Psellos commended the comprehensivness of Hermogenes' treatment of rhetoric, and the tenth-century dictionary known as the *Suda* comments that everyone has Hermogenes' rhetorical treatises to hand. A new treatment of the basic subject was unnecessary, but later commentators customized it for their own time and needs: in the eleventh century, Sikeliotes substituted illustrative examples from the fourth-century theologian, Gregory of Nazianzos, for those from Demosthenes (Ševčenko 1981: 300), much as Psellos had done, but in the thirteenth century Planoudes turned back to the earlier Neoplatonic commentary tradition (Kustas 1973: ch. 1; Hunger 1978: 79–88; E. Jeffreys 2007: 170–71).

The groundwork for a better understanding of these Byzantine works is now beginning to be laid, for example by a modern edition, translation, commentary, and illustration through late-antique examples of Hermogenes' work, *On Issues* (Heath 1995), the work that generated most commentaries. Hermogenes' text is austere and technical, but Heath's contextualization of it within the ancient system of rhetoric and his illustration of how it was applied in practice fleshes out and enlivens this skeleton. A later study (Heath 2004: 218–28) argues that Hermogenes' *On Issues* represented a transformation in the organization of rhetorical exposition and hence of teaching, by which arguments for a case were identified before the construction of the speech as a whole. The application of the theory is demonstrated in declamations (the Greek term is *meletai*), show presentations of the marshaling of arguments for fictional forensic or deliberative case-studies, which marked the culmination of a student's rhetorical training, when he progressed from the uncontextualized *progymnasmata* that treated specific topics and individual themes—the constituent parts of a speech—to more complicated marshalling of a variety of techniques to present a case in a historical or fictional context (Russell 1983: 9–12) and delivered it before his fellow-students (Cribiore 2007a: 154). Great rhetors like Libanios and Chorikios of Gaza produced model declamations that modify set patterns by adding an individual stamp—in Chorikios's case, an interest in character (Webb 2006).

The two treatises (third or fourth century) on epideictic or display oratory (dubiously) ascribed to Menander Rhetor are accessible through an excellent modern edition with commentary and translation (Menander: Russell and Wilson 1981), but they did not attract the same stream of Byzantine commentaries, paraphrases, and exercises as did the works of Aphthonios and Hermogenes. The earliest extant manuscript is tenth century, and a possible fifth-century allusion has been challenged (Heath 2003: 124–31), though Prokopios of Gaza's panegyric for the emperor Anastasios (early sixth century) is close to Menander's pattern, and ninth-century panegyrics appear to draw on Menander or a very similar text (Vinsom 2003). The lack of scholarly tradition on Menander is surprising, given that display oratory was the element of the art most practiced in Byzantium, for example in the proliferation of imperial encomia in the Palaiologan period. But Menander is less technical than Hermogenes and may have been considered self-explanatory (E. Jeffreys 2007: 171), and of course the many examples of panegyrics and other occasional pieces themselves provided additional models. While it is useful to measure occasional speeches against Menander's guidelines, it is well to remember that textbook schemes are founded in practice, rather than *vice versa* (Russell and Wilson 1981: xxxi–iv), while the more skilled and experienced orator will seek to attract attention by innovation. But this takes us from the schoolroom to the practice of rhetoric in the real world.

Rhetoric in Practice in Secular Contexts

For the most gifted, the step from the rhetor's class to a top job was a short one. In Middle and Late Byzantium, teachers such as Michael Psellos in the eleventh century and Manuel Holobolos in the thirteenth acclaimed the eagerness of their students to praise the emperor and brought them before him to demonstrate their rhetorical attainments in an imperial panegyric: this produced offers of a job in imperial service for men like Nikolaos Mesarites' brother John and Theodore Metochites (Magdalino 1993: 343; Angelov 2007: 19–21). The practical rewards and career potential of a training in rhetoric could not be more transparent. Such rewards might indeed be sought out through the composition of unsolicited panegyrics: the correspondence of the fourteenth-century intellectual Michael Gabras shows that he composed several imperial orations for Andronikos II which he circulated to friends for comment. At least one came to the emperor's notice, but did not make sufficient impression for him to request a performance (Toth 2007: 436–7). Similar tactics operated at more humble levels and under other regimes: in the sixth century John Lydos composed a verse panegyric for the prefect from his province, who secured him a government post, and he was later invited by the emperor Justinian to celebrate the achievements of his reign, while his Egyptian contemporary Dioscoros of Aphrodito composed verse encomia to accompany his prose petitions to local dignitaries (Kelly 2004: 12–13, 52–3; Fournet 1999: 317–43). About the same time, the North African Corippus was successful in achieving personal advancement in the capital through an imperial letter, and wrote his four-book poem in celebration of the accession of Justin II to express his gratitude; on Justin's part it was convenient to have a panegyrist

gloss over the dubious circumstances of his accession (A. M. Cameron 1980). Similar motives operated in the late ninth century when the new emperor Leo VI composed his panegyrical funeral oration of Basil I to legitimize the Macedonian regime following his deposition of his father (Vinson 2003). Under Manuel I Komnenos (r.1143–80), elaborate imperial panegyrics delivered at annual gatherings at Epiphany became central to imperial ceremonial, and the occasional rhetoric of theater mushroomed in an articulation of the dynamics of patronage (Magdalino 1993: 247–8, 335–56).

In a different cultural climate, the panegyrist might assume the role of imperial advisor. In the late empire, traditional rhetorical structures were called upon to respond to a period of crisis. Political panegyric, while including elements of praise, was used by men like Maximos Planoudes under Andronikos II Palaiologos (r.1282–1328) to criticize, counsel, or commend specific policies—foreign alliances, military tactics, issues of taxation, the imperial succession. Or the panegyrist might issue a warning, perhaps assisted by irony. Only when these speeches are located in their proper historical context and read against other types of evidence can they be properly understood (Angelov 2007, 2003). Cameron (A. M. Cameron 2006b: 20–23) has identified a "panegyric mode" that cuts across boundaries of genre in late-antique and Byzantine writing. The importance of praise as a means to personal advancement and its versatility and subtlety as a rhetorical tool underlie its prevalence.

The reason why emperors were on the lookout for clever rhetoricians is illustrated by the careers in imperial service of two of the most learned men of their day, about whom we are well informed from their own writings—Michael Psellos in the eleventh century and George Akropolites (1217–82). Psellos's career was chequered and ended in oblivion due to the vagaries in imperial favor, but it involved an official position as a rhetor under Constantine IX Monomachos, and key positions in imperial government, including leadership of the embassy that offered the crown to Isaac I Komnenos. Akropolites' career was more straightforward. His higher education was funded and organized by his patron, the emperor John III Vatzates, and he in turn instructed the young Theodore II Laskaris, while at the end of his life he taught for ten years or so in Constantinople in an imperially driven initiative to re-establish higher education in the capital after the years of exile in Nicaea. While in imperial service Akropolites accompanied the emperor on his travels, when he was responsible for drafting imperial letters and documents, including a treaty—his signature survives on a chrysobull of 1277—and he was sent on embassies; at different times he performed military and fiscal offices and presided over a court of justice. His family background was in civil administration, but he achieved status through an arranged marriage to a member of the Palaiologos family, though he himself attributed his wealth to his learning (George Akropolites: Macrides 2007: 5–28).

What the employment of both shows is that emperors needed at their side men whose mastery of words enabled them to turn their hand not only to prestige orations but to diplomatic negotiation and the drafting of letters, treaties, legislation—whatever was needed. Skill in rhetoric, produced by the long and rigorous intellectual training of the schools, was far more important than specialist financial or military

knowledge. Ambassadorial and judicial duties assigned to Psellos and Akropolites, as well as the advisory role of late panegyrics identified by Angelov (2007, 2003), lend support to the view (e.g. Heath 1995, 2004) that the dominance of epideictic oratory in Byzantium, at the expense of the other two strands—forensic and deliberative—has been overstated. The prominence throughout the entire Byzantine era of the Hermogenic texts which taught the identification and arrangement of arguments in disputed cases similarly suggests that these branches of rhetoric continued to be important.

Techniques learned through the *progymnasmata* such as character impersonation (*ethopoiia*), praise (*encomium*), or detailed description (*ekphrasis*) might be combined in the construction of a persuasive case in an epideictic display. Paul the Silentiary's ekphrastic verse encomium composed for the rededication of St Sophia, and delivered amid elaborate ceremonial in the dying years of Justinian's reign (Macrides and Magdalino 1988; Mary Whitby 1985), is a good example, while in the highly innovative *Buildings*, Prokopios turned description of Justinian's building-works into a persuasive vehicle for imperial encomium (Elsner 2007; Webb 2001; cf. Webb 2003).

The pervasiveness of rhetorical modes of thought can be detected even in apparently unpretentious works: Akropolites' historical narrative, for example, is not rhetorical by comparison with the narratives of his contemporaries, but it is shaped by an unobtrusive rhetoric in its inherent comparison between the emperors Michael VIII Palaiologos and Theodore II Lascaris, which amounts to a defence of Michael against the Laskarid dynasty even though Akropolites owed his own prominence to the latter (Macrides 2003). The structure and balance of Skylitzes' synoptic history is responsive to examination in the light of rhetorical handbooks and has striking similarities with the compositional techniques of military manuals, suggestive of a shared rhetoric of synopsis (Holmes 2003). And analysis of the apparently simple *Advice and Anecdotes* of Kekaumenos (late eleventh century) suggests that he was familiar both with the tradition of advice literature and with at least the first four of the *progymnasmata* exercises (Roueché 2003). It is dangerous to "read" even an uncomplicated Byzantine text without understanding of the shared rhetorical background of its author and audience. And in a quite different genre, exposure of the centrality of the *progymnasmata* to their composition and interpretation has refocused understanding of the Byzantine novels of the Komnenian and the Palaiologan periods through the medium of sophisticated modern techniques of literary criticism (Beaton 1996). The dust has been shaken from the term rhetoric.

Rhetoric in Practice in Christian Contexts

Byzantine society was deeply religious, and the division made here between secular and Christian does not reflect its dynamics (A. M. Cameron 1979). Byzantium did not develop a separate system of Christian education: Julian's edict against Christian teachers in 362 was short lived, and its impact probably more limited than has often been thought (McLynn forthcoming), and the great leaders of the church, theologians and bishops such as Gregory of Nazianzos and Basil of Caeserea in the fourth

century, Photios in the ninth, the associates of Psellos in the eleventh, and prominent clerics and writers of the Komnenian period like Eustathios, archbishop of Thessalonike and commentator on Homer, and his pupil Michael Choniates, humanist and metropolitan of Athens, were educated in the traditional curriculum. Basil of Caeserea famously counseled the young to select what is beneficial from pagan literature and avoid the rest, while his brother Gregory of Nyssa sent his writings on the heretic Eunomios to the pagan rhetor Libanios for feedback on style (Wilson 1975: 9–11). Secular patterns of rhetoric were adapted and modified for Christian purposes—for panegyric and polemic, sermons, and saints' lives. The *progymnasma* exercise of point-by-point description (*ekphrasis*) in particular was refined and given a new identity in the description of church buildings, so as to eliminate the distinction between the visible and the invisible and unveil to the listener aesthetic qualities beyond mortal vision (Webb 1999). Secular rhetorical events were staged in Christian contexts: at least from the twelfth century imperial panegyrics were delivered annually at Epiphany and other liturgical feasts (Magdalino 1993: 343; Toth 2007: 435) and Christian funerary orations for royal figures were delivered in the imperial palace by churchmen like Gregory of Nyssa. Laymen—the unnamed eulogizer of the empress Theophano, for example—and secular officials, including the emperor Leo the Wise, delivered Christian homilies (Antinopoulou 1998; Vinsom 2003: 17–18).

One particularly seamless but complex transition was the evolution of conventions of panegyric to accommodate the needs of Christian hagiography and biography, which merge into one another. The classical Greek tradition of celebratory funerary oration readily embraced numinous Christian leaders like Basil (celebrated by Gregory of Nazianzos), while biographies of late-antique Neoplatonic leaders such as Porphyry and Plotinos paved the way for Christian hagiography. In the fourth century, Eusebios's *Life* of the emperor Constantine has much in common with the *Life* (attributed to Athanasios) of St Antony, icon of ascetic spirituality, and Eusebios's account of Constantine has been misread as "a strictly historical work, rather than as a work of apologetic suffused with ideological and encomiastic themes and style" (Eusebios: A. M. Cameron and Hall 1999). Late-antique texts such as these are at the heart of a valuable recent collection of essays (Hägg and Rousseau 2000) that explores (among much else) their underlying background in the classical system of education, and establishes the importance of context for assessing the rhetorical strategies that underlie them: Averil Cameron identifies a "war of biography" in the fourth century in which Christians and Neoplatonists vied in defining the truly authentic human being, the *theios aner*, or godlike man (A. M. Cameron 2000). Celebratory Christian texts were composed with a specific audience and purpose in mind, sometimes secular or ecclesiastic, but often also monastic, where they might exhort to the faith, inspire to new levels of Christian *askesis*, or provide relaxation and entertainment, in the manner of the novel that enjoyed such a revival in the Komnenian and Palaiologan periods. In both kinds of text, material is selected and shaped to tell a particular story. The more accurately the Christian texts can be contextualized, the better able we are to read their rhetoric, in the broad sense of "strategies of discourse," the techniques by which Christianity achieved its rapid and successful dissemination at the beginning of the Byzantine era (A. M. Cameron 1995).

Hagiography and biblical narrative were particularly susceptible to rhetorical manipulation in the form of paraphrase or metaphrasis, rewriting at a different stylistic level, whether more or less elevated. Like *ekphrasis*, paraphrase was one of the elementary *progymnasmata*, commonly exemplified at the most basic level by the prose paraphrase of a passage of Homer (Roberts 1985: 40–51). At the opposite end of the spectrum, more complex adaptation of Homeric narrative is exemplified in the loose paraphrase of Manuel Gabalas (fourteenth century), which may set up Odysseus as a model for staunchness in adversity in hard times, relevant to Manuel and his contemporaries; here passages concerned with the pagan gods are omitted (Browning 1992). In the fourth century, Apollinarios is reputed to have versified substantial sections of the Bible to provide a text for school use. Nothing of this survives—and the story may be an invention (Mary Whitby 2007: 197)—but we do have from the middle of the fifth century a hexameter verse paraphrase of the Psalms and another by Nonnos of Panopolis, more famous for his epic *Dionysiaca*, of St. John's Gospel, as well as renderings of the Gospel stories in Homeric centos attributed to the empress Eudokia. These writers operated at various levels: whereas the anonymous Psalm paraphrast (this text is wrongly attributed to Apollinarios) was diligent in following his biblical model line-by-line, Nonnos colorfully elaborates on and vastly expands the Gospel model, intertwining it with exegesis based on Cyril of Alexandria's contemporary commentary. These texts attest the sparky collision of Christian materials and Hellenic techniques in cultured circles in the early period.

As for hagiography, many saints' lives went through various phases of accretion and rhetorical reshaping to suit changing audiences and political agendas. Among examples recently well studied are the texts associated with the early female martyr Thekla, where the *Life and Miracles*, a fifth-century paraphrase and expansion of the second-century *Acts*, exploits techniques of novel writing in reshaping the material to suit a new agenda in promoting the saint's cult site (Johnson 2006a, 2006c), and the seven narratives associated with the early-seventh-century martyr Anastasios the Persian (Flusin 1992): shortly after the appearance of the original *Acts* in 630, George of Pisidia produced a rhetorical upgrade, perhaps for the official inauguration of the cult in Constantinople (Mary Whitby 2003); a second independent encomium dates to the Middle Byzantine period, and a third to the late tenth century, when Symeon Metaphrastes undertook a more systematic rescripting of the hagiographical corpus, arranged according to the feasts of the church calendar. Symeon's achievement was acclaimed in an encomium by Psellos, and the collection became standard monastic reading (Ševčenko 1981: 300–3).

It is perhaps against this background of the rhetorical upgrading of Christian narratives that we should read the high rhetorical style characteristic of the Byzantine homily. Once more the trend was set by the fourth-century fathers, above all Gregory of Nazianzos and John Chrysostom. A recent study of Gregory's rhetorical examples (*paradeigmata*) distinguishes between his choice of pagan metaphors in works of moral exhortation and his preference for the biblical in his autobiographical poems (Demoen 1996): it is the common Hellenic cultural background that Gregory chose as the tool for mediating with his flock. Other preachers also varied their rhetorical techniques according to material. Andrew of Crete (late seventh/early eighth centu-

ries) deployed dramatic dialog and monolog in teaching Chalcedonian Christology, but paedagogical question and answer in exegetical homilies (Cunningham 1998). John of Damascus used poetic techniques to convey his carefully formulated doctrine of the Incarnation (Louth 1998), and Photios's friend, George of Nicomedia (ninth century), sought to transport his audience to higher realms through rhythmic poetic rhetoric, comparable to the elaborate rhythmic *kontakia* (verse homilies) of Romanos from the sixth century. In his homily on the presentation of the Virgin, however, George chose the judicial style of apologetic defence. A vigorous manuscript tradition suggests that George was more popular as a preacher than the better-known Photios (Tsironis 1998). That George owed this popularity to his rhetorical skills is corroborated by the account of how Proklos came to prominence in Constantinople in the fifth century when John Chrysostom's successor Attikos enlisted his assistance, because of his own limited knowledge of Greek rhetoric and debilitating Armenian accent (Barkhuizen 1998). The high rhetorical style of works intended to reach a broad audience has sometimes puzzled scholars, but this material suggests that high rhetoric is what this audience understood and deemed appropriate to the solemnity of religious celebration.

A final word belongs to a genre already touched on that spans the notional Christian/secular boundary, and which has been described as "one of the Byzantines' greatest literary achievements:" the letter (Mullett 1981: 75; repr. Mullett 2007). The texts are short, the corpus huge, diverse and not yet fully studied, but the versatile art of rhetoric is fundamental to it: many letters include passages of ekphrasis, forensic tactics of defence might be deployed, as in archbishop Demetrios Chomatenos's defence of his crowning and anointing Theodore Komnenos Doukas in 1224 (Macrides 1992), while a carefully composed consolation letter incorporating judiciously selected classical or biblical exempla could bring genuine solace (Littlewood 1999). And a letter might be accorded rhetorical performance by being read aloud to friends or a larger gathering.

Rhetoric in the Future

Recent work on the Byzantine letter demonstrates the wrong-headedness of negative views of the terms "Byzantine" and "rhetoric." Littlewood (1999) argues that a carefully composed letter of consolation can meet the needs identified by modern analysts in the bereaved. And the search for a valid way to "read" the Byzantine letter has been assisted by the exploitation of theoretical approaches to literary criticism (Hatlie 1996; Mullett 1997; Mullett 2007 *passim*), an approach which is proving increasingly productive in interpreting the rhetorical strategies of a range of Byzantine texts (e.g. A. M. Cameron 1991; Beaton 1996; Webb 2006; Johnson 2006a, 2006c). Above all it is now appreciated that rhetoric in its broadest sense is fundamental to all Byzantine texts, which were composed to meet the needs of specific moments and occasions. A range of analytical approaches will be essential to achieve proper understanding, but it is at least clear that rhetoric cannot be cast aside as inessential packaging.

FURTHER READING

For rhetoric in Byzantium, E. Jeffreys 2007 is a good introduction. Hunger 1978 is a very full survey. *ODB* has entries under most of the terms used in this chapter, including "Rhetoric." The collection of papers, E. Jeffreys (ed.) 2003c, covers a wide range of topics. Two important volumes appeared after this article was submitted. Webb 2009 is a penetrating study of the theory and practice of ekphrasis within the cultural context of late antiquity. Penella 2009 provides the first English translation of the corpus of rhetorical exercises composed by the prominent early sixth-century rhetorician, Chorikios of Gaza, together with an account of the reception of Chorikios in Byzantium and Renaissance Italy.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

Text and Context in Byzantine Historiography

Roger Scott

Justinian, emperor for 38 years (527–65) and, according to Prokopios, the effective ruler for an extra nine years during his uncle's reign (Justin I, 518–27), is among the more famous of Byzantine emperors for his achievements, which include building Hagia Sophia, codifying Roman Law, closing Plato's Academy and restoring the Western Roman Empire. Yet, apart from the building of Hagia Sophia, these achievements get scant treatment in Byzantine chronicles. Instead, the event that is mentioned in more chronicles dealing with Justinian than any other (apart from Hagia Sophia) is the story of Andrew and his blind dog that performed amazing tricks as they traveled the countryside (Scott 2006a, Duffy 2009):

> Unbeknown to the dog, the man would take from bystanders gold and silver rings and coins of different emperors, … place them on the ground and cover them with dung … [and] then command the dog to come and pick up from the earth each man's ring and give it to him. … Then he would say to the same dog, "Bring me the coin of the emperor Leo." After a search the dog would pick it up in his mouth and give it. … Likewise he brought the coin of any other emperor when so instructed. Furthermore, … he would point out women who were pregnant, fornicators, adulterers, the generous and the misers, all quite accurately. In the case of pregnant women he would guess whether they carried a male or a female child (Cod. Paris. Gr.1710, tr. Mango and Scott 1997: 325).

We first meet this story in Malalas's sixth-century chronicle, and it was still being told by the last Byzantine chronicler, Manuel Malaxos, writing under the Ottoman Turks in the late sixteenth century, though he has Andrew's dog, still in the reign of Justinian, identifying the coins of Ottoman sultans a millennium before they were minted (Sakel 2006).

Several points arise from the repetition of this and other such stories. First and foremost is the Byzantines' fondness for a good story, which lies at the base of much of their writing of chronicles and histories. It is the power of these stories which, along with records of ceremonies, anniversaries and the like (Croke 2001), helps

shape their memory of the past. Second, Byzantine chronicles often use repetition and apparent plagiarism as a way of demonstrating their authenticity and accuracy. Repetition is a way of implying that sources have been followed accurately. In contrast, it is a characteristic of histories to justify their narrative as a correction of their predecessors' errors, but in so doing they also repeat the same stories, though modified in some way. So, third, neither of these forms of justification should be accepted at face value, as both are constrained by the awareness of a sophisticated audience that knows its history through these well-known stories and expects, even requires, that the stories that form its memory of the past be retained. Chroniclers sometimes reveal their awareness of their audience's knowledge (e.g. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5982, cf. Scott 2006b: 55). Thus, fourth, any revision of the past had to ensure it stayed within the limits of what was accepted as true. Both histories and chronicles operate by subtle variations on old stories while either pretending to follow their source precisely (for chronicles) or by building on their audience's expectation, memory, and acceptance of such stories (for histories and occasionally chronicles). Fifth, the power of stories in shaping public opinion results in their being used for propaganda. It is the need for either exploiting or combating the power of stories that have been so used which results not only in stories being reshaped to meet new situations but also in the need for writing history, to "correct" the propaganda of a previous regime. That stories from the past could have such power implies a society that knew and valued its history. This in turn explains why so much history was written and why historiography plays such a large role in Byzantine literature. But it revolves around a Byzantine love of stories and their impact.

Good Stories

My brief for this chapter was to "look at the ways in which written sources contain their own biases" and hence the need "to read the text in its context." I shall suggest that we need to be aware not just of an author's bias but of the effect of tradition. So a story may well get adopted by society in a way that is oblivious to its original bias, but is retained because the audience "knows" it to be history. The story of Andrew's dog is repeated so frequently simply because it made a good story; whatever lay behind the original story was forgotten entirely. It is a compulsory part of the history of Justinian. This sets out well the problem of discussing "text and context," namely the need for us to recognize that stories play a significant part in Byzantine culture while not knowing how to get behind a story and its exploitation for particular contexts.

This fondness for history as a collection of stories becomes clearest with Constantine Manasses, whose twelfth-century 6,620-line verse chronicle is despised by historians because it does not give us any new facts and is not exactly reliable about the facts it does provide. Yet this would not have concerned Manasses as he did not set out to provide his audience with new facts or a reliable continuous narrative. Rather, he was enormously popular, as the quantity of surviving manuscripts suggests, simply because he related a select number of popular stories from history so well (Nilsson

2005, 2006). Likewise, despite her classicism, Anna Komnene includes many carefully worked stories in her *Alexiad*, which has led one scholar to see them as an oddity and argue that they were created by her husband Nikephoros Bryennios, a historian himself, who also shapes his own history with many a fine story (Howard-Johnston 1996). Bryennios reveals his fondness for stories as the basis of his history when he introduces one such story with, "And then something happened to delight those who love stories" (Nikephoros Bryennios, *History*: II.8, Gautier 157). Indeed his history has been described as being a "forerunner of Romance, with the core of the tale being the marriage of Alexios and Irene." (*ODB* 1.330). There is no doubt that Anna exploited her husband's history for the early part of the *Alexiad*, adapting his narrative to suit her own purposes, but there is also no reason to doubt her ability to narrate stories in her chosen manner, whatever their original source, so there is no need to accept Howard-Johnston's argument (Macrides 2000; Reinsch 2000). However, the 25 fully developed stories and eight others that he noted remain testimony for the importance of the story in Anna's narrative. Much earlier, in the sixth century, Agathias introduces digressions to his narrative far more frequently than can be explained by classical imitation of the genre. He seems to do this mainly as an excuse for introducing stories with which to charm his audience (Gador-Whyte 2007). Likewise, his predecessor, Prokopios, opens his *Wars* with a string of delightful stories, which challenge our credulity. Prokopios uses these to fill, with minimal information, the century-long gap between Arkadios's arrangement with the Persian king to safeguard his young son's rule in 410 and Justin's rejection of a similar reciprocal deal with Kavad. These stories enable Prokopios to entertain his audience (and also suggest Roman moral superiority to Persians), while ostensibly providing the background to the outbreak of the Persian war which was his actual subject. So good stories always formed a prominent part in Byzantine history writing, and modern readers of Byzantine histories and chronicles need at all times to beware of being seduced by the stories into accepting them as history. A failure to do this partly explains both the strength as narrative, and the weakness as history, of John Julius Norwich's very popular Penguin history of Byzantium (Norwich 1997).

The classicizing historians, such as Prokopios and Agathias, also create a different form of distortion rather than actual bias through imitating their classical predecessors. This has been well examined by many others (Cameron and Cameron 1964; Moravcsik 1966; Hunger 1969–70; Mango 1975), so we need simply remember that *mimesis* both allowed writers to display their skill and readers to delight in recognizing classical allusions. Such imitation in Byzantium is not limited to historiography, but there imitation meant limiting subject matter to war and politics, and language to the vocabulary of classical writers. Though this produces the absurdity in an aggressively Christian society of some extraordinary circumlocutions to avoid using Christian terminology, we need also to appreciate the skill of historians in remaining accurate despite imitation. So Prokopios gives an accurate account of a bubonic plague while imitating closely Thucydides' account of a different disease, a skill repeated eight centuries later by Kantakouzenos (Hunger 1976; Miller 1976). The limitation in subject matter is more worrying, perhaps revealed most easily by noting Agathias's omission of the fifth ecumenical council or by comparing Prokopios's *Wars*

with the very different range of topics touched on rather than covered by Malalas's *Chronicle*, where Justinian's wars are scarcely mentioned (Scott 1996). That classicizing histories are works of literature does need greater attention, though recent attempts at this, accompanied by unwarranted denigration of more sensible scholarship, have sadly descended rapidly into implausible claims that major Byzantine historians were crypto-pagan devotees of classical philosophy, as if this somehow passes for literary criticism (Kaldellis 1999, 2004). Far more rewarding for literary interpretation has been a recognition of history as a drama (Taragna 2006 on Theophylaktos Simokattes) presented orally with a full display of rhetorical techniques to create narrative, which was the more effective in a work read aloud to an audience (Angelou 2010).

Truth by Plagiarism in Chronicles

A feature of all history writing is for authors to stress the truth of their account. Byzantine historians are no exception. Though historians (and the later chroniclers) stress more the need to correct a predecessor's errors, the earlier chroniclers frequently justify their accuracy by emphasizing instead that they have followed earlier accounts faithfully and have introduced nothing of their own. In effect, they are pointing out that what we consider plagiarism they regarded as a virtue, even a necessity. But we should also be on guard at such claims, for they may well be made just to disguise the fact that the chronicler is actually altering a predecessor's account. The claim of virtual plagiarism appears to be made proudly at least partly as a defence against any accusation of originality and to hide the fact that the author has introduced his own interpretation. So here the reader needs to be alert and not be beguiled.

For instance, Malalas emphasizes that his chronicle is a summary of previous chronicles, of which he provides a list going back to Moses, which he will relate as truthfully as possible. Yet it is plain that Malalas sometimes produced his own independent line, particularly on his calculation of the years since the Creation (so establishing that the sixth millennium had passed safely and joyfully with the Incarnation and did not herald the end of the world) just as it is equally obvious that any debt his account of early Old Testament history may owe to Moses and the Pentateuch is at best very indirect, no more than a general awareness of the story (E. Jeffreys 1990a, 1990c). One suspects that in much else he will have departed from the interpretation of his source. Likewise Theophanes states in his preface, "I did not set down anything of my own composition, but have made a selection from the ancient historians and prose-writers and have consigned to their proper places the events of every year arranged without confusion." Yet even when following the wording of his source almost verbatim, Theophanes can produce a quite different interpretation by rearranging the context or through the addition of a coloring adjective or adverb or by some other means, and he seems to do so quite deliberately, including alterations to chronology. He may have arranged events without confusion, but this may differ

quite considerably from what was in his source. So at the outset of the reign of Theodosios II (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 5871) we hear that,

> [Theodosios] … was a western Iberian by race, of noble birth and admirably capable in war. Being pious and Orthodox, he immediately won a victory by force of arms over the barbarians in Thrace.

Here, "admirably capable in war" and "being pious and Orthodox" are Theophanes' additions to the text in his source, which he otherwise follows verbatim. So Theophanes' additions are the words which explain Theodosios's success, the success being measured in terms of victory in battle which he can take from his source with some extra emphasis, but the reason for the success, Theodosios's piety and Orthodoxy, is the result of Theophanes' own interpretation. It is piety and Orthodoxy that bring success in battle. The interference is significant even if it is slight. It also reveals the nature of Theophanes' bias. Similarly his account of Justinian, though much of it is taken verbatim from Malalas, changes Malalas's picture of Justinian's reign from one which is dominated by the importance of Christianity in secular affairs (though the actual theological issues are notably absent) and in which Justinian's reconquest of the Western empire is scarcely mentioned, to a reign in which military conquest is dominant and in which the disasters between 539 and 542 are minimized. Theophanes achieves this by a careful selection and rearrangement of Malalas's material and by paying scant respect to Malalas's chronology, plus some judicious use of Prokopios while still remaining amazingly faithful to the actual wording of his source. It changes Malalas's image of Justinian totally, again linking military success with piety, but is very effective in giving the impression of being a faithful, unoriginal, and hence reliable, copy of his source (Scott 1996, 2006b).

Such reinterpretation shows that the reader of a Byzantine chronicle must be on guard against a too easy acceptance of the chronicler's assurances. The very blandness of much of the narrative of most Byzantine chronicles can easily deceive us into accepting that the chronicler is simply copying his source. Yet every chronicle had its own purpose, so there is almost always some adaptation of material taken from earlier chronicles. This may involve a different political purpose or, when the politics behind a story have been forgotten, the chronicler, though still feeling a need to include a story that had become an established part of the tradition of a particular ruler, may choose to write up a story in a way that reflects the literary conventions of his own period, or else a chronicler (and more particularly a historian) may take an incident from one period and adapt it for another, still bringing with it memories and overtones from an earlier account.

Reinterpretation of Stories

As Alexander Kazhdan pointed out, "The Byzantines were capable of understanding the political implications of propaganda, although concealed usually between very

vague expressions and images. They were capable as well of counter-propaganda, of the reinterpretation of imperial symbols and words, of imposing over them a perverse meaning" (Kazhdan 1983: 27). This was not confined to their reading of histories or stories. They appear equally aware of imperial propaganda in art or on coins or in the use of icons by the Church. So when Isaac I Komnenos introduced coins with himself in military rather than civilian dress, the chronicler Skylitzes Continuatus commented that Isaac had done this to show that he owed his success not to God but to his own military prowess. "Byzantine propaganda was ubiquitous, embodied in objects, actions and words" (Kazhdan 1983; Eastmond 1994).

I suggested long ago that a reason for writing a history was the need to "correct," that is counteract, the interpretation (or propaganda) of a previous regime, and this was best done by taking the previous regime's propaganda and adapting it to suit one's own needs (Scott 1981). My favorite example, which I have used elsewhere, is a story told by Pseudo-Symeon to the discredit of the emperor Michael III, but which must have originally been part of Michael's own propaganda. The chronicler tells the story to show Michael's abysmal depravity. Having begun with Michael and the hippodrome, Pseudo-Symeon continues:

> But I will relate something even worse. It is not enough to call it improper, it is completely contrary to imperial dignity. One day Michael met a woman whose son was his godchild, coming away from the baths with her jug in hand. Leaping off his horse and dismissing all but a few intimates in his suite, he went with her on foot. "Don't be alarmed," said he. "Won't you invite me in? I would enjoy some bread and white cheese." The poor woman was so overwhelmed by the presence of the emperor under her roof that she was quite helpless. So it was Michael who had to lay the table (or rather the stool as she did not own a table), and for a cloth he used the damp towel. Next he asked her for the key of the cupboard, and so the emperor was all at once the one to lay the table, to be cook and host. And when he had eaten with her he returned to the palace on foot. (Pseudo-Symeon, *Annales* 17, 660–61, *PG* 109 cols. 721C–724A).

No doubt there was a body of opinion which agreed with the chronicler that the story was shocking. But the story had originally been part of Michael's own propaganda. We know this because one single manuscript states that his actions had been "in imitation of Christ," a phrase carelessly retained from what was no doubt the original version of Michael's propaganda. (Theophanes Continuatus, IV.37.200, *PG* 109, col. 213D). Yet the need for adapting an earlier emperor's propaganda in this way underlines the power such a story must have had in society together with a recognition of an audience that was interested in history.

Apple and Eagle

The technique can be seen earlier in stories from the fifth and sixth centuries. I have argued elsewhere that much of Malalas' *Chronicle* Book 18 reflects Justinian's official propaganda which answers or is answered by criticisms of Justinian in

Prokopios's *Secret History* (Scott 1985). Both sides use stories of particular incidents to convey their message, such as Theodora's attempt to save prostitutes from sin, a successful measure in Malalas, a dismal failure in Prokopios. Yet the process can best be seen in the creation of seemingly irrelevant but captivating stories about Theodosios II's wife, Eudokia, and about his successor Marcian (discussed in more detail in Scott 2010). These stories, which again challenge our credulity, doubtless survive as true history because they were good stories which audiences continued to demand. They are repeated in chronicle after chronicle for the next millennium, with the Eudokia story in particular attracting scholarly interest (e.g. Holum 1982; A. D. E. Cameron 1982; James 2001). The circumstances which gave rise to two of the stories explain their treatment in chronicles.

In the first story, the young emperor Theodosios is presented with an enormous apple, which he gives to his wife, Eudokia, who gives it to her boyfriend Paulinus, who unfortunately gives it back to the emperor. A suspicious Theodosios then asks Eudokia what she had done with the apple, and she, perhaps understandably, lies, saying, "I ate it." Theodosios promptly gets rid of Paulinus, while Eudokia, in disgrace, asks to be sent to Jerusalem. The second story gives two accounts of how portents involving an eagle foretold that the future emperor Marcian, when he was just a lowly soldier, would in fact become an emperor, and that God had really intended him to become emperor.

The second story was obviously invented to bolster Marcian's shaky claims. On becoming emperor in 450 Marcian immediately married Theodosios's 51-year-old sister, Pulcheria, despite her vow of perpetual virginity. The pair promptly instigated the Council of Chalcedon in 451, overturning the second Council of Ephesus, the "robber synod" which in 449 had declared Monophysitism Orthodox. Chalcedon made Marcian and Pulcheria the heroes of Western Orthodoxy but infamous among Monophysites, leading to several stories abusing Marcian and Pulcheria as servants of the devil. Monophysites claimed to be particularly outraged by Marcian's marriage to Pulcheria, suggesting either that Marcian had seduced Pulcheria or that Pulcheria had abandoned her life of chastity to keep her position as an empress. All the stories emphasize their sexual immorality. These include a Monophysite version of the apple story, surviving in Syriac and Armenian versions, in which Theodosios gives the apple not to Eudokia but to Pulcheria, who gives it to her lover Marcian, whom Theodosios promptly banishes (Theopistos, *Vita Dioscori*; Burgess 1993–4; von Esbroeck 2001).

Burgess deserves the credit for suggesting that this Monophysite version came first, with the Eudokia story being a necessary response to it. Pulcheria simply had to be presented as immaculate in Greek Orthodox tradition because she was so influential at Chalcedon. A story about a dirty love affair, though false, could not be left unanswered. It is too powerful and memorable a story. So the original story was revised and applied instead to the emperor's unfortunate wife. Yet Eudokia cannot have gone to Jerusalem in disgrace. There she was active in administration and had sufficient funds to build monasteries, churches, homes for the poor and elderly, a large cistern, and the city walls, altogether an unusual way of punishing an adulterer (a point I owe to Annie Carter). Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos puts her expenses as 20,480 pounds of gold, a huge sum. (Giving its modern value as several hundred

million dollars is academically unsound but helps make the point). Both the money and her activities suggest that an untainted Eudokia went on a pious mission to the Holy City with the full support and authority of her equally pious husband. The story of Eudokia's disgrace survives in the Greek tradition simply as a result of their accepting a false story which had only been invented to counter another equally false story that was politically damaging. What is important to note is the Byzantine recognition of the influence of a good story and its incorporation within histories. Yet if Marcian had managed to control the Monophysite tradition as effectively as he controlled the Chalcedonian, and the Syriac and Armenian version had not survived, we would not be able to see how this came about.

But despite being a fiction, the Eudokia story was evidently so successful in eclipsing the original story that the Monophysites next responded with their own Eudokia story, only preserved in Ethiopic in John of Nikiu (*Chronicle* 87.1–22; Charles 1916: 105). It absolves Eudokia of any responsibility for Paulinus's death, explaining her move to Jerusalem as resulting from a holy man's warning that Theodosios's successor would be a heretic (which from the Monophysite point of view Marcian certainly was). To avoid being responsible through producing an heir, Theodosios and Eudokia "abandoned all conjugal intercourse and lived, by mutual consent, in befitting chastity," which leads to Eudokia's request to visit Jerusalem "to worship there in righteousness," and certainly not in disgrace. John makes absolutely clear that his account is not simply a rebuttal of the Chalcedonian version but that the Chalcedonian version had been invented by "lying historians who are heretics and abide not by the truth … [saying] that Paulinus was put to death because of the empress Eudokia" (*Chronicle* 87.13, Charles 1916: 105). So, just as the Chalcedonians had found it necessary to create their own apple story about Eudokia to save Pulcheria from Monophysite slander, so too the Monophysites later needed to respond by imitating the Chalcedonian story as closely as possible. With story, counter-story and counter-counter-story, both sides clearly recognized not merely a story's effectiveness for propaganda but the necessity of adapting their fiction to their opponents' fiction and having it recorded as history.

The earliest version of the Eudokia story is in Malalas, who omits Marcian's eagles which first occur in Prokopios's *Vandal War*, but compensates with a story that Theodosios had visited Ephesus to be told by St John in a vision that Marcian would succeed him. Since it took almost a month to appoint Marcian, the story can only have been created posthumously. If Marcian really had Theodosios's support, his appointment would only have taken a couple of days, at most. The story of Theodosios's journey to Ephesus and vision, like the stories of the eagle, was invented to shore up Marcian's dubious claim to be emperor.

The apple and eagle stories underlie Theophanes' ninth-century need for upholding the honor of Chalcedon's heroes. It is now clear to me, though it was not when I published my translation of and commentary on the chronicle (Mango and Scott 1997), that Theophanes was still acutely aware of the strength of the Monophysite version for the reigns of Theodosios and Marcian, with their attacks on Marcian, Pulcheria, and pope Leo in Rome, and their perfectly accurate claim that Theodosios supported Monophysitism. So Theophanes produces a narrative that "corrects" all these Monophysite errors, and restores the reputation of our heroes of Orthodoxy.

He presents a perfectly Orthodox but gullible Theodosios being tricked into supporting the Monophysite Robber Synod by devious Monophysite bishops and a cunning palace official, who also exploited Eudokia's feminine weaknesses. Theophanes also needed to undermine Monophysite praise for the Western emperor Valentinian for refusing to recognize Marcian. This he achieves by borrowing his opponents' technique, accusing instead Valentinian of sexual transgressions, while pointing too to the failures of Valentinian's reign in contrast to the East, where, he claims (relying no doubt on Marcian's propaganda), there was "complete peace, justice and happiness during Marcian's rule" and that "those were indeed Golden Years because of the emperor's goodness."

Both Malalas and Theophanes appear to be presenting rather bland and perhaps trivial accounts, yet both manipulated these accounts to suit their own interests. Malalas had little interest in theology (he covers the great synod at Chalcedon in just twelve words), but he was interested in stories dealing with morals, especially chastity, and with stories involving divine prophecies. Such stories occur frequently throughout his narrative. That is why Malalas included the stories of both Theodosios's vision and his apple, but not Marcian's eagle. Theophanes, desperate to present a narrative that exalted the heroes of Orthodoxy (and certainly exonerated them from criticism), adroitly presents a narrative that achieves this. Both have succeeded remarkably well in evading the prying eyes of modern scholarship, which, if not always convinced by their accounts, has nevertheless tended to accept that these are bland, simple, and so generally trustworthy reports. The modern reader needs to beware of being lulled into such confidence.

The Later Period

A quarter of a century ago, I argued that, whereas the earlier classicizing historians up to the seventh century belonged to a continuous (though evolving) classical tradition, those of the later period were part of a revival of that tradition which could be distinguished by the intrusion of the author into the narrative or more particularly by their involvement in the subject matter (Scott 1981). In this I was picking up a comment by Georgina Buckler that "the Byzantine who began to write a history or chronicle felt that he was entering upon a solemn and exalted task, a duty owed to the dead and still more a service to be rendered to the living" (Buckler 1929). Buckler had shown that the motivation for a number of historians from the eleventh century onwards was their loyalty to their patron or family and an urge to ensure that their deeds were properly remembered. A less exalted interpretation was offered by Romilly Jenkins (1954) for the imperial biographies commissioned by Constantine VII and known as Theophanes Continuatus, where "the reigns of the emperors who immediately preceded Basil I could not be represented as other than uniformly disastrous because it was part of the imperial myth that Basil supervened to bring salvation after fifty years of uninterrupted decline."

Buckler's observations relied considerably on her reading of the prefaces of historians where they often revealed their biased loyalty, whereas Jenkins relied more on

the chronicler's renewed awareness of classical biography. Since then, the study of Byzantine history has benefited particularly from several major projects in prosopography. These, together with more awareness of theoretical studies in literature, have led to several more perceptive studies of Byzantine historians. What still emerges is that Byzantine historians were always alive to the possibilities of using history to present a case under the guise of being simple reporters of the facts.

In the eleventh century, Michael Psellos wrote a radically different chronicle by not drawing on the common stockpile of stories but creating his own, most notably from his own experiences. These are necessarily single-use rather than repeated stories. Euthymia Pietsch, building on 1980s' and 1990s' scholarship, shows the success of Psellos's literary innovation. She suggests that Psellos's autobiographic tendency "undoubtedly prepared the way for the literary achievements of the Komnenian and Palaiologan era" (Pietsch-Braounou 2005, 32). So Ruth Macrides (1996) in discussing Anna Komnene's adoption of authorial intrusion and George Akropolites' clever use of it, argues that "a study of its function brings the historian of today closer to the meaning of the history and serves as a reminder of the central role of narrative in the recovery of the past." Pietsch demonstrates how well his chronicle served Psellos as an *apologia* for his own career, associating himself with sound advice and success and distancing himself, often quite subtly, from failure and from incompetent imperial advisors, all of which he achieves through a carefully controlled use of delightful anecdotes.

A little later, in reacting against Psellos's new-fangled style of history and urging a return to the good old days when historians such as Theophanes stuck to the facts, Skylitzes found a more patriotic way of using history to recall the deeds of famous families, as Catherine Holmes (2005) has shown. Holmes has argued convincingly that Skylitzes' variations from his source, Theophanes Continuatus, are often deliberate rather than careless and help him to manipulate his picture of the past, which is organized thematically rather than chronologically. Writing as a loyal official under Alexios I, Skylitzes was aware that many noble families were opposed to the current regime. So he created a narrative that drew attention to these families' achievements under Basil I and the rewards they gained from their loyalty. By parading their names rather more prominently than they deserved, his narrative creates the impression of their deeds outdoing those of Basil. It is a novel way of using history in the service of families, and in line with the literary inventiveness of the Komnenian period.

The great name among Byzantine historians remains Anna Komnene. Western historians find bias, pointing to discrepancies with Western accounts of the Crusades, while Byzantinists note bias in protecting her father's record. More intriguing perhaps than details of historical accuracy are her more literary manipulations. Again there has been a number of important recent studies, notably those of Reinsch 2000 and Macrides 2000 but I shall draw largely from Buckley (2006 and private discussion). Rather than thinking in terms of bias, we should note the complex tradition out of which Anna fashions her Alexios, playing on her audience's awareness of the riches of their cultural and literary inheritance. Her Alexios is based partly on the Byzantine ideal since Eusebios's *Life of Constantine* of the emperor as God's earthly representative; partly on a tradition of the exploits expected of a warrior emperor, most obvious

in tales of the deeds of Basil I; and partly on Homeric heroes, both an Odysseus (Macrides 2000) and an Iliadic warrior superior to Agamnenon: "Unlike Atreus's son Agamemnon, he needed no dream to urge him to battle—he was longing for a fight."(*Alexiad* 7.3.1). But the image is not static. Rather, she develops her Alexios, both as his function changes from revolutionary leader to warrior-defender to Christ-like as God's representative, and as she develops her picture of the empire, first saved from disaster by her father and then recreated as God's realm on earth, a new Byzantium that is in its way a new Jerusalem. In terms of looking at "text and context," what is significant are the demands Anna makes of her readers. She insists that they recognize this whole literary and historical tradition, and so, guided by her narrative, they can and must evaluate Alexios and his Komnenian achievement against this background.

The overall pattern is clearest in Anna's claim that Alexios is "the thirteenth Apostle" "ranked with Constantine [the Great] … or should follow immediately after Constantine in both roles—as emperor and as apostle" (*Alexiad* 14.8.8). Anna's readers will constantly be reminded, as Alexios's story is told, of comparable actions by heroes from their national history, even if unable to attribute such allusions with absolute certainty. This enables Anna to emphasize the emperor's role while still providing a seemingly factual narrative of events. Dressing his troops as Scythians (*Alexiad* 8.1.5) perhaps evokes but civilizes Basil's grim recostuming consciously or unconsciously (Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, 32); his pretended blinding of Roussel, adapted from Bryennios's *Hyle* (his history), may reflect Narses' pretended execution of hostages (Agathias, *History* 1.12). As "thirteenth Apostle," Anna's references to Alexios's theological passions recall a general tradition of great emperors rather than precise examples (remembering that even Justinian was esteemed for churches and theology rather than conquest [Scott 2006a]). So the narrative of his reign is never totally isolated from the Byzantine past, which is not to say that Anna distorts the narrative, just that she presents it in a way that her cultured audience will find stories from the past keep resonating and demanding comparison. Additionally her Alexios is the answer to Michael Psellos's recent complaint that "not one of the emperors in my time bore the burden of Empire entirely free from blame to the end" (Psellos, *Chronographia*, 4.11). For Anna (*Alexiad* 12.5), "in him alone the true character of an emperor was seen again in the Roman court—after a long interval; it was as if then, for the first time, the imperial dignity dwelt like some guest in the Empire of the Romans." So she reclaims Psellos's idiosyncratic stories with her own seemingly straight versions. Psellos uses the tent-scene drama of Isaac I Komnenos's usurpation to emphasize imperial qualities in a tense situation, though more to advertise his own performance. Anna models Alexios's tent-scene confrontation with the rebels very closely on Psellos, sometimes verbatim, but inverts the narrative to highlight Alexios's greater peril and deeper strength. Where Psellos was ambivalent about a gullibly stupid but lovable Constantine IX's claims to divine protection (*Chronographia* 6.131–2, 135–50), Anna leaves no doubt about Alexios's. Though grumbling about Alexios's lack of self-protection both when he sleeps with his sword hanging from the tree and Bryennios eyeing it (*Alexiad* 1.6.9) and again when Diogenes cannot strike the sleeping emperor fanned by a child (*Alexiad* 9.5.3), she thus makes clear

without comment that he, no fool, is divinely protected and, though anxious and provident about the empire, is not concerned about himself, a subtle but underlined distinction. Perhaps too the child's fanning recalls subliminally Basil (and earlier, Marcian) being fanned by the eagle's wings, again a divine signal from another tradition. By not being clear in her allusions, whether to Psellos precisely or to tradition in general, Anna not merely allows her readers to indulge in imaginative comparisons but virtually insists that they do so. But readers are left in no doubt that Alexios surpasses Psellos' fourteen rulers.

In all Byzantine historiography, writers recognize that particular stories from history are known and demanded by audiences. That is their context. It is up to writers not simply to comply but to exploit this for their own narrative, to create room for their bias. Anna takes this all to a new level and exploits a huge literary and cultural tradition. Her technique depends, nevertheless, on a tradition of adapting old stories in a culture of using history for propaganda. There is much still to learn here and to enjoy from the baggage that Byzantine historiography conceals in its background. The reader, however, needs to stay alert.

FURTHER READING

Odorico, Agapitos, and Hinterberger 2006 and Macrides 2009 both provide useful collections on the theme of history as literature. A. M. Cameron 1970 and 1985, together with Michael Whitby 1988, are essential for understanding Early Byzantine classicizing historians and their context. For early chronicles and especially Malalas, E. Jeffreys 1990b is an important collection of papers, along with Croke 2001, as are their other publications listed in the bibliography. I have quoted from the Penguin translations of Psellos and Anna Komnene by E. R. A. Sewter. W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, 2007), though wrong on Malalas, provides a worthy and earnest antidote to my interpretations and approach. We await his further two volumes to cover the Middle and later periods. For later historians, Buckler 1929 is still useful for occasional comments on authors other than her main subject of Anna Komnene, but for individual Byzantine authors it is best to consult the works referred to in this chapter and detailed in the bibliography. In addition to works specifically mentioned just above, I acknowledge particular debts to Buckley 2006; Burke 2006; Gador-Whyte 2007; Macrides 1996 and 2000; Nilsson 2005 and 2006; together with past discussions with Brian Croke, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Patricia Karlin-Hayter, Ann Moffatt, and Cyril Mango.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Byzantine Narrative: the Form of Storytelling in Byzantium

Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis and Ingela Nilsson

A long-standing interest in *what* stories Byzantines told and heard, wrote, and read has in recent years been wedded to an emerging interest in *how* they crafted and shaped those stories. Scholars and students of Byzantine literature have increasingly pursued the contribution of narrative form to the meaning or effect of stories, sacred and secular. Cities fall and emperors die out of "proper" sequence, but in keeping with the narrative unity of texts; time dilates in the story of a saint's life, expanding and contracting in accordance with the instructive or even entertaining potential of the event recounted; narrators nestle their stories in elaborate layers of hearsay. Variously and summarily relegated to mere "technique," such important features of story-organization are as much a part of the information they purport to communicate as any character or putative event. An appreciation of the contribution of formal order to an understanding of a story is indispensable. "Narrative" may thus be used to designate formal features of design and arrangement of stories, a systematic analysis of those aspects of storytelling which otherwise may go unnamed or unnoticed even as they act upon a reader's or listener's imagination.

So pronounced has been the recent curiosity about narrative features of texts, and so revealing the systematic investigation of questions about voice, perspective, temporal ordering, and other such elements, that the study of narrative has graduated in some quarters to an autonomous field of inquiry, *narratology*. Scepticism about the all-too-confident and indiscriminate application of "narratological" approaches to texts of diverse origin and character should not obscure the unique insights and instructive considerations afforded by what is, after all, a concern with the most basic elements of language and rhetoric, and for which Byzantine writers themselves would have had great sympathy. Like any society, Byzantium was, in part, the evolving creation of a large and complex web of intersecting stories which informed the actions and perceptions of its people, even as those same people continuously retold and recast these stories for themselves. Many an important type of spiritual, political, or indeed entertaining function was carried out by means of narrative form. And while

some type of narrative was perhaps inevitable in a variety of genres, the specific types of narrative adopted by Byzantine writers were historically contingent and had important consequences.

Stories abounded throughout Byzantine history. They differed in scale and scope, and touched on subjects both frivolous and grave, transitory and eternal. Byzantines, whether urban poor or landed aristocrats, monks, merchants, soldiers, emperors, men and women, and not least children, all lived their lives in deference to narratives, large and small, regional and ecumenical, both private and public. In so doing, people tacitly acknowledged the capacity of narrative form to supply them with meaningful understanding of their world and with guidance for life as well as death. The best-known and most vital story, the narrative governing all other narratives, was that of divine Providence, a story with an acknowledged beginning, middle, and, quite significantly, an inexorable end. And although anticipated by Scripture, Providence remained a story largely discernible only *as* it unfolded, through a continual process of retrospective confirmation of what had been historically prefigured in prophetic texts embedded within an essentially *narrative* biblical tradition. The significant outlines of this overarching story are well known. To pious Orthodox Byzantines, biblical narrative provided not only an account of *what* happened, but quite significantly, the divine, revelatory quality ascribed to that account provided Byzantine culture with a touchstone of narrative legitimacy—that is, *how* stories ought to look and sound, their canons of plausibility, formal aesthetics, and various elements modern scholars group under the rubric of narrative poetics (Sternberg 1985).

As inheritors of diverse anterior cultural traditions, the Byzantines drew on an impressive range of narrative forms and content, ranging from the detailed mythical accounts expanded upon by Homeric epic or Athenian tragedy, to the less obvious but none the less significant infusions of narrative "materials" from assorted ethnic and linguistic groups of the empire and its neighbors, including Armenians, Syrians, Jews, and Persians. They in turn (re)shaped many of these story forms over time within particular literary genres to satisfy evolving expectations and cultural needs born, to some extent, of previous narratives or newly emergent historical contingencies, like the rise of monasticism or the evolution in "Roman" imperial authority. The lives of Saints, for example, quite possibly the most prolific literary genre in Byzantium's long history, and certainly its most enduring and widely available literary genre, emerged, in part, as a response to accounts of non-Christian miracle-working sages, like that about Apollonius of Tyana narrated by Philostratos in the second century, which may itself have been designed to rival the miracle-worker stories of emergent new religions (Cox 1983). The ideological and broader social impetus for the saint's *Vita*, or *Life*, may well have been fissures in the incipient structures of ecclesiastical authority and the attendant rivalries within Christian communities over religious authenticity and local cult. But the particular narrative form given to these stories of holy men and women and their calling to a life of self-sacrifice, miracle working, and exemplary behavior greatly influenced all future accounts of the virtuous life for Christians of every rank down even to our own times.

This is not a survey of the contents of Byzantine narratives, but one of Byzantine narrative form: the manner in which the principal genres which told stories, both

historical and fictive, related events and shaped reality within the text. Current and past scholarship about narrative offers a dizzying range of plausible formulations of what constitutes "narrative." A broad classification has been chosen here—namely, *the linguistic representation of an event or a series of events occurring in the past, regardless of whether that past be real or fictional.* The minimum requirement has therefore been sequence, rather than a systematic effort on the narrator's part to derive consequence from the sequence of events, or to present events in a causal relationship to one another (cf. White 1987). Narrative is accordingly not seen as a genre, but as a mode of representation vital to certain literary genres whose understanding turns on the placement of facts and events in a sense of time already elapsed (cf. Fowler 1982: 236–9).

Yet even with such a restricted definition, it is obvious that any filter designed to "catch" all instances of narrative form would collect too much material for any meaningful discussion of the broad narrative tendencies in Byzantine literature. Narrative interludes of one kind or another may be found in many types of Byzantine literature, including homilies, panegyrics, funeral orations, letters, and a myriad of other writings. The more compressed the narrative, moreover, the greater the reliance on implied or widely familiar stories. Often the mere mention of a name suffices to allude to a well-known account. For instance, the likening of someone to Lazarus in a sermon would have served to conjure in listeners' minds the miracle as related in the Gospels. Likewise, panegyrics for illustrious individuals often invoked past actions by them or events which marked their lives. Yet we cannot meaningfully understand either type of literature, sermon or panegyric, as a "narrative genre." However neatly crafted and indispensable narrative passages, explicit or implied, may be to this or that type of non-narrative literature, they are nevertheless interludes, a contributing but minor key in the formal arrangement and impression of the work as a whole.

We shall focus here on the primary narrative texts in Byzantium—historiography, hagiography, and extended fiction (the Komnenian novels and the Palaiologan romances)—because in our view, narrative literature proper requires a certain "magnitude of story" found in these genres. This is not the same as the length of the narrative, but it is also not entirely separate from it. That said, the exclusion of many types of texts from this survey is not meant to dismiss the significance of narrative in "non-narrative" texts. If anything, the appearance of narrative in otherwise non-narrative literature may well testify to a kind of "narrative vernacular," at times perhaps far more revealing than the self-conscious fully fledged narrative genres whose systematic use of storytelling makes their authors unusually adept at narrative and therefore not entirely representative.

Historiography

Historiography is an inviting point of departure for a survey of narrative style and structure. Few types of literature involve a sustained commitment to narrative as historical writing must. Still, while the requirement of sustained narrative discourse about a sufficiently long period of time (the aforementioned "magnitude of story")

may lead us to historical writing as a genre, it does not necessarily help us negotiate some of the analytical dilemmas occasioned by the particular texts which fall under the broad rubric of "historiography." The conventional division of Byzantine historiography into "chronicles" and "history" is only one such dilemma, albeit a revealing one for the purposes of this discussion, since it turns, in part, on matters of narrative unity and continuity.

The partition of Byzantine historical writing into chronicles and history is not a modern scholarly innovation; it was a distinction already asserted by some Byzantine authors and commentators on literature. Photios, whose opinions are not likely to have been as exceptional as the compass of literary interests represented in his *Bibliotheca,* noted the significance of narrative method and duration in relation to the scope of the story told in chronicles and works nominally classed as "history" (Karpozilos 2002: 30–32). And while Photios's aim was not a programmatic definition of these two genres, his succinct characterizations of 37 works of historiography and their distinguishing literary traits, including but not limited to narrative style, suggests that narrative development and its attendant requirement of a more limited scope, of both time and subject matter, neither of which was common to chronicles, was sought and obtained in a genre whose very name, "*historia*," was synonymous with the idea of the past (Treadgold 1980).

Born in part out of a concern with chronology, early Byzantine chronicles like that of John Malalas and the *Chronikon Paschale* sought to establish the relative occurrence and order of various events, especially those vital to Christian Providence. They therefore took in the whole sweep of human history from the Creation down to the time of their composition. Among the consequences for narrative style was a laconic and staccato form of telling "what happened" in an abridged and sometimes rigorously succinct manner. Often, the only narrative thread tying events to one another to form a "larger story" here is that of time itself. The sometimes disjointed narrative frame, with disparate entries of no more than a few lines for this or that "event," is compensated for by the sequential and coherent (if not regular) temporal frame of the chronicle's linear and inexorable progression from the Creation to the present, and beyond to the implied "end of history" in the Final Judgement, the unnarratable end of the story.

It has been argued, tentatively, that chronology, God's time, forms the "plot" of Christian chronicles. According to this view, eschatology implicitly furnishes the missing narrative links by placing seemingly disparate events within the same order of meaning (White 1987: 9, 16–18). While such a seemingly rarefied reading of some Byzantine chronicles is possible, the strictly formal consequences of the annalistic chronicle remain. The absence of express causal links between events held together by a loose contemporaneity (e.g. the acclamation of a new emperor in Constantinople, the appearance of a comet, another march on the empire's frontier by the Persian armies, the rebuilding of a fallen church in a provincial capital, all within a single entry) required only the barest narrative framework. It therefore encouraged a simple formal sequence, "and … and … and," with its attendant paratactic arrangement of events one after another, and not *because* of one another, inhibiting the genre's

recourse to a subordinating language necessary for joining one event to another, the narrative idiom of causality.

But generalizations about the narrative "sparseness" of chronicles risk overlooking significant instances and degrees of narrative development, such as the length of narrative discourse devoted to particular "stories" over relatively shorter periods of historical time. Nearly all chronicles include longer stories of some kind, often revolving around a specific figure or noteworthy event. The conflicts of Theodosios I with the Church, or the military campaigns of Justinian are clustered in such a way as to produce a sense of narrative continuity. An occasional "wherefore" nestled between brief sentences may at times even point to causal links between events. Moreover, the implied historical time of such stories necessarily exceeds that of the particular dated entry which occasioned the start of the narrative and thus dislocates the temporal order otherwise maintained by the genre. The chronicler rarely acknowledges this outright, but the narrative "logic" of some events is nevertheless preserved; or as narratology would have it, narrative coherence is projected onto the past.

It is important to recall that few historical writings of antiquity or the middle ages entirely abandoned the annalistic structure as a formal narrative line on which to hang events. Thucydides sets forth the story of the Peloponnesian war as a function of both seasonal campaigns and ideological themes, distributing events along both plot and strict periodization. Some late antique and mediaeval historians, like Prokopios, as distinct from author-compilers of chronicles like Malalas, appropriated this model for their own histories and chose a particular "event," or set of "events," as the principal object of their history, which in turn enabled them to exploit the greater potential for narrative unity. Prokopios's account of Justinian's reconquest and defence of formerly Roman-controlled territory takes advantage of its more limited scope to expand the narrative detail which joins otherwise diverse facts into an integral whole. Causal conjunctions, relative pronouns, and a host of syntactical and semantic devices denoting not just sequence, but consequence and causal specification, abound in Prokopios, who is widely believed to have sought a model in Thucydides, among others. The elevated register of atticizing Greek was an important corrolary of this narrative concentration. The revival of such extended and focused narrative historiography in the Middle and Late Byzantine period coincided with a renewed confidence in the use of the language's more complex structures and vocabulary, its capacity for morphological and syntactical inflection in the service of narrative sophistication.

The increase in the linguistic capacity for narrative subtlety and inference would have meant little without a concomitant decrease in the spans of time historians chose to narrate. This concentration of narrative in a relatively short span of time, often measuring no more than two or three generations, radically shifted the proportions of narrative discourse to historical time. The period of 1081 to 1204 was cumulatively narrated by no fewer than four historians—Nikephoros Bryennios, Anna Komnene, John Kinnamos, and Niketas Choniates. By contrast, one-fifth of George Synkellos's chronicle, which begins with the Creation, takes up events from the period 740 to 813. The foreshortening of time in so-called "history proper" greatly expanded the

narrative possibilities available to the author. A sense of narrative rhythm could be created by varying the proportions of text and time, thus making the distribution of narrative discourse appear less haphazard (Müller 1968; cf. Barthes 1994).

This meant historians could impose far greater formal unity on the past and thus create "a story" with the approximate outlines of a plot. By distilling, as it were, *a* story from the past, and not just seemingly heterogeneous events and facts, historians were able to avail themselves of certain narrative devices vital to effective storytelling, not least the expedient combination of immediacy and detached perspective through alternating use of "scene" and "summary." Dramatically staged encounters, alternating with large-scale narratives of complex actions, help create a variable tempo in narrative movement (Genette 1972: 122–44). Such tacit acknowledgment of aesthetic factors in historical writing were joined to a practical need to dwell on some matters while necessarily eliding over others, yet appearing to leave nothing relevant out. Paradoxically, this increased artfulness is also largely responsible for the disproportionate value attached to such historical works as sources. Inasmuch as they share certain narrative attributes wrongly associated exclusively with fiction, they satisfy our own desire to reduce the multiplicity of a period to a few coherent, sustained historical themes, such as "decline" in the case of Niketas Choniates, or "revival" in the case of George Akropolites. They achieved this to no small degree by offering a "plot" to which events may be related, corroborating each other and advancing a story.

If the vast sweep of the chronicle presented events in a "paratactic" fashion, that is, with little or no "subordination" between them to indicate relations of cause and effect, extended narrative historiography offered significantly more opportunities for such inferences. Sequence was more frequently made contingent on consequence, and the resulting impression was one of development. In the opening chapters of Michael Psellos's *Chronographia*, for example, events prompt changes in the character and conduct of the newly sovereign young emperor Basil II, changes which in turn impell him gradually to change his manner of governance, as well as his policies. Each part of the narrative contributes to an emerging whole, so that later parts cannot be properly understood or appreciated without knowledge of what came before. A tendency remained, nevertheless, for historiography to devolve into episodic storytelling. Anna Komnene's twelfth-century *Alexiad* repeatedly illustrates the treachery of the Western Crusaders and their Norman allies in vividly-drawn vignettes, complete with dramatic speech. The events related or dramatized do not necessarily advance the story so much as they reveal the essential attributes of the principal decision makers: Anna's father Alexios is trusting and sincere; Bohemond, the ambitious Norman upstart, is disingenuous and treacherous. This insistence on the essential and unwavering character of individuals, as well as "national" or ethnic attributes, translates into a kind of narrative reductionism. Each is shown repeatedly to be acting out his nature.

The function of character as the controlling center of a narrative was, of course, not a Byzantine innovation. Its utility had been affirmed in many a work of influential Greek literature, from the Homeric *Odyssey* to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives.* Nevertheless, Byzantium inherited a pronounced biographical preoccupation in both pagan and Christian literature (Momigliano 1971; Cox 1983). The anecdotal narrative struc-

tures of the Christian Gospels were wedded to the extended biographical scope of texts like Philostratos's *Apollonius of Tyana* or Iamblichos's *Life of Pythagoras*, both of which attempted to illustrate the truth of their protagonist's teachings through stories of their attainment of wisdom and subsequent achievements. The Christian counterpart to this genre, the *vita* of a holy man or a holy woman, provided in turn both a touchstone of the authentic Christian life and an influential model of narrative organization for much Byzantine literature in other genres.

Hagiography

Early hagiographic texts like *The Life of St Antony* or *The Life of St Symeon the Stylite* became virtual archetypes for this enduring form of sacred biography. The narrative structure of the *vita* quickly became organized around a series of *topoi*, each meant to demonstrate by narrative means a significant Christian lesson to be drawn (Pratsch 2005). An explicit insistence on spiritual edification in these "tales beneficial to the soul" made the actual narrative subordinate to *a priori* truths it was meant to frame. The better part of many saints' lives are thus little more than a catalog of the exploits of a holy person, though often in remarkably vivid scenes with a parable-like didactic function. There is consequently little narrative interdependence between parts of a "typical" *vita*, since each self-contained episode performs its distinct moralizing function.

Narrative particularity was obviated by the figural similarity of each saint's circumstances and achievements, regardless of geography, time, or anything which might require the author-narrator of the saint's life to account for the distinctness of *a* story. One can speak with reasonable confidence about the familiar narrative stages of a saint's *vita*, including early harbingers of the future saint's holiness, the precocious piety of the young saint, the renunciation of earthly wealth and family ties, and eventual self-imposed exile from society and the adoption of a soul-cleansing asceticism, followed in many cases by a growing reputation for holiness and even miraculous healing, which in turn occasions revealing and instructive engagements with both believers and sceptics. In most cases, once the *vita* enters the "mature" phase of the holy man or woman's life, the narrative becomes noticeably more episodic, with less chronological specificity and fewer causal links between succeeding events. One could even change the order of numerous episodes in many saints' lives without upsetting any "narrative logic" of the *vita*, since hagiography repeatedly resolves into what may be termed event-clusters. While each of these episodes may possess its own measure of internal unity, taken together they are not made to appear as having evolved or developed one from the other. There is no necessary beginning, middle, and end. And although the required "magnitude of story" is implicitly furnished by the span of the holy person's life and works, the sense of time elapsing is significantly diminished by the use of a compound rather than developmental narrative form.

This, like other characteristics of Byzantine narrative literature, stemmed from a compositional approach focusing on amplitude, variety, and multiplicity, rather than on unifying structures. Though seemingly unsophisticated, such episodic

accumulation would not have proven so enduring if it had not served its audience well. Episodic or serial organization of events, linked by an associative rather than strictly formal unity, may indeed prove very effective in the reading. Inasmuch as it "opens up" the narrative structure to otherwise disparate, anecdotal material, it may "yet provide excitement, charm, poetry, and of course, variety" (Ryding 1971: 44). The seeming lack of narrative integration "was an aesthetic fact of medieval life, symptomatic of a profound difference in taste *and not of a failure of mind* [our italics]" (Partner 1977: 203). Byzantine literary aesthetics were conditioned in no small part by expectations and habits of reading (or listening) generated by the combination of particular contents wedded to and derived from individual forms. Among the most common of these were biblical stories and other religious narratives, like the *martyria* or *apophthegmata patrum*. And like the similarly episodic chronicles, saints' lives, too, assumed the wider "plot" of a divine "oikonomia" and the implied narrative movement of Christian eschatology. The formal disjointedness in much of hagiography's episodic structure was thus resolved by the presumed "storyline" operating at the providential level. As so many Byzantine homilies and sermons emphasized, man's perception is inherently circumscribed, his ability to fully grasp causal relations limited. God alone could supply all the narrative links.

This theology of limited and partial understanding of events had its formal counterpart in the reading, and more commonly, the listening, habits of many a Byzantine audience. While there were some in Byzantium who had both the means and leisure to read whole narrative texts, such individuals remained the exception (Cavallo 2006). Far more common, at all levels of society, would have been the partial instalment of a story, whether from a saint's life read aloud in a monastic refectory or a verse chronicle "performed" at court or in the household of an influential patron or patroness. And while reception should not be estimated as having determined all form of narrative organization or scale, it should not be ignored either. Large-scale narrative coherence presumes a certain kind of sustained reading from beginning to end of a text. But some of the genres most illustrative of Byzantine narrative technique and style, like hagiography or chronicles, function more like repositories of smaller self-contained stories held together by little more than a convenient organizing principle, like the life of a saint or an indiction year. Memorable excerpts of *vitae*, for example, were assembled in *menologia*, collections of saints' lives organized by date. These church calendars amounted to a kind of narrative miscellany, with brief episodes that were read out on the feast day of the saint in question. Considered from such partial reading, the large-scale narrative structure of many texts may not have even mattered.

Conventions of genre and audience reception which favored episodic narrative did not, however, preclude authorial initiatives which centered, in part, on larger-scale narrative technique, and even considerable formal sophistication. Literary *mimesis*, or "imitation," often regarded as a conservative (and even constraining) force in Byzantine literature, could also prompt innovation by offering up legitimate precedents for what were effectively new or highly individual means of storytelling. In such cases, the ordering and exposition of a story could itself become part of the content. Thus, even so well established a genre as hagiography in the tenth century could

serve as the basis for a remarkable narrative arrangement like that of the *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*, by Niketas Magistros (see Holmes in this volume for another discussion of this *Life* in a different context). Though its themes are partly modeled on earlier female saints' lives, this text displays a refined narrative structure, setting its main story within a series of other stories and thus framing one narrative with another and locating the telling of the holy woman's miraculous life in another tale.

The nominal hagiographer Niketas relates how he came to hear the story from a monk named Symeon, who had related his own experience with a Euboian hunter, who had met Theoktiste, who had in turn told him her own story. The sequence of dependent narrative frames has been described as "the best Chinese box narrative of the medieval world," part of whose appeal lies in the "inward" movement towards the next embedded story (Mullett 2006: 4). The *Vita* is written in an elevated style, with quotations and echoes from both patristic and classical literature, along with straightforward borrowings from prior *vitae*, like the *Life of Mary of Egypt*. After some traditional opening comments on the humble skills of the writer and the profit to derive from the present story, the hagiographer embarks on his tale: "I was once on the island of Paros …" Niketas describes the reason for his journey and then the meeting with the hermit Symeon, who then takes over and tells his own story. Symeon explains the smashed ciborium of the church, prophesies a successful continuation of Niketas's journey, and finally urges Niketas to write down the story he will tell of an encounter with a hunter from Euboia who had told him of his own remarkable meeting with Theoktiste. Then comes the hunter's story of how he had once come to Paros to hunt and there met a strange woman who told him about her extraordinary life. And so we finally reach the ostensible narrative center. Theoktiste's story, in her own words, covers only one paragraph, followed by the resumption of the hunter's encompassing tale. In due course the hermit Symeon exhorts Niketas once more to write all this down, whereupon Niketas closes the *vita* by calling it "the unexpected gain of our Cretan expedition" and pronouncing Theoktiste a saint to be remembered for ever.

Whatever its beneficial aims as a *vita*, the *Life of St Theokiste* leads its audience to the saintly figure by narrative means which draw attention to themselves and whose purpose is not easily reducible to the conventional edification or instruction of much Byzantine hagiography. Narrative has here become an end in itself, as much an entertainment perhaps as a means of edification.

Extended Fiction

It is in the twelfth century, however, that Byzantine authors and audiences display an unprecedented delight in narrative experimentation and effects. Prompted perhaps by a more systematic and confident engagement with ancient models, Byzantine writers tried their hand at narrative methods which, though never wholly absent from mediaeval Greek literature, had until then not been pursued for their own aesthetic ends quite so thoroughly. The best known of these literary efforts is the "imitation,"

or perhaps more accurately, the emulation, of the post-classical Greek novel. A handful of Byzantine novels, one in prose, the remainder, significantly, in verse, took up the millenium-old, and patently fictive, plots from their ancient predecessors, turning them with considerable narrative virtuosity. *Hysmine and Hysminias*, by Eumathios Makrembolites, to give but one example, albeit an outstanding one, trades heavily on the storyline of the better known second-century novel, *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, by Achilles Tatios.

If the plot of Makrembolites' story is somewhat derivative (though hardly unoriginal in its Byzantine guise), its narrative structure exhibits a masterful handling of "scene" and "summary," as well as narrative pacing through insertion of such seemingly "non-narrative" elements as elaborate ekphrastic passages about artworks and dramatic characterizations known to Byzantine authors as *ethopoieia,* both of which are rendered in a manner so integral to the story's setting as to seem indispensable parts of the "action" proper. Perhaps most remarkable is the unusual way in which the novel converts its story-time into narrative sequence. The first six chapters closely chronicle the passage of six days in which the young lovers meet and resolve to elope in a bid to stay together. The next two chapters relate a separation (with the ostensible death of the girl) lasting nearly a year before events reunite the devoted lovers once more in two chapters covering approximately seven days which bring about the novel's closure. This temporal syncopation, as it were, produces a sonata-like narrative structure with abridgments or ellipses of time appearing to serve the aesthetic organization of the novel (Nilsson 2001). There are, of course, other, equally interesting elements of narrative ingenuity in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, like the calculated use of dreams to arrest temporal movement while still depicting and anticipating narrative action, albeit in an "unreal" plane of reality. Readers of Makrembolites' novel, then, as now, are likely to have registered the patently aesthetic aims of its narrative arrangement. A new type of story, a fiction at that, was joined to a new type of narrative form.

No less revealing of the interest in narrative innovation during this period is the formally singular chronicle in verse by Constantine Manasses, himself, not coincidentally perhaps, the author of a Byzantine novel. Composed of 6,620 verses in what has come to be known as "political" meter, Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike* is an eclectic accumulation of carefully wrought episodes of "world" history, beginning with the Creation and continuing with events that lent themselves to the author's express desire to fashion narratively memorable versions of such staples of received storytelling as the Trojan war. Manasses forgoes the usual inclusiveness of the Byzantine chronicle. Instead he selects a relatively small number of events which he amplifies in accordance with a perceived "plot" or essential character of the story in question. Creation is thus related in the manner of *ekphrasis*, or vivid description, while the Trojan War is imbued with thematic overtones of romance familiar to audiences of the contemporary novel. Both stories subordinate matters of chronology, dating, and narrative sequence to the plot or genre type that Manasses employs for effect as well as for display of his rhetorical prowess (Nilsson 2005 and 2006).

The quality, as well as the quantity, of narrative sophistication, if not outright innovation, in this period was so significant that one scholar has recently written of

"the novelization" of twelfth-century Byzantine literature (Mullett 2006). "Novelization" highlights the widespread adoption, whether in fiction, historiography, or hagiography, of more elaborate and sustained narrative features associated, though not necessarily originating in, the Byzantine novel. One need not accept any pattern of influence between genres to recognize the new confidence with which writers undertook many more types of narrative than had ever been done in Byzantium. And what is equally remarkable, given Byzantine literary conventions, is that some appear to have done so outside familiar or recognized genres. The anonymously composed *Timarion*, a fictional tale of death and "resurrection" following the ancient pattern of *katabasis*, or descent to the underworld, attests to the appetite for "new" stories, in this case one of Lucianic temper, yet more detailed and told in a manner quite unprecedented in Byzantium (Baldwin 1984). On the historical side, *The Fall of Thessalonike*, by Eustathios, one time bishop of that city during its capitulation to the Normans in 1185, reads, at least in the first half, like a memoir of historical events as experienced by one man, a narrative format which no previous Byzantine history had adopted.

While the subsequent centuries did not again achieve the degree or range of formal innovation witnessed by the Komnenian era, they also did not lose sight of the narrative precedents established in that period. Historiography and hagiography, though they did not again attain the type of narrative coherence valued in some of the more outstanding texts of the late eleventh and twelfth century, nevertheless punctuated their texts with vividly drawn narratives whose debt to stimulating storytelling, over and above mere information or spiritual instruction, is obvious. The persistence of expectations regarding narrative form, as well as content, are evident, for example, in the continued adaptation of the novelistic genre in the Palaiologan period, dating roughly from the end of the thirteenth to the late fourteenth centuries, which saw yet another "revival" of narrative fiction in the late Byzantine "romance."

While each of these romances could serve to illustrate distinct qualities of narrative fiction at this time, *Libistros and Rhodamne* displays not just its own prodigious narrative ability, but does so even as it alludes to its own genre through the use of names and motifs reminiscent of previous novels. The story in fact conspicuously foregrounds the narrating act by framing the tale of one love story with another tale, in which a young man woos a young princess by telling her the story of his and Libistros's adventures, so that "the act of storytelling becomes itself an event in the [larger] story" (Beaton 1996b: 126). The narrating act, or more precisely, acts, are carried out by neatly balanced and symmetrically alternating narrators (Agapitos 1991). The changes in voice and perspective constantly reshape the audience's experience of the story through shifts in dramatic immediacy. And this is as true of the text's internal audience, at court, as it is of its actual, external Byzantine audience, perhaps also at court.

The romances of the Palaiologan period, together with the novels of the Komnenian era, are perhaps the most striking and prominent examples of both the willingness and the ability of Byzantines to create and appreciate narrative virtuosity allied with original, because fictional, stories. There was little written before, or since, in the European canon, which these texts have to envy as far as narrative achievement

is concerned. But the celebrity of the novels, certainly within Byzantine studies, should not distract us from the breadth of narrative types evinced throughout Byzantine literary history. We have touched on the more obvious genres here, and just barely at that. Each of the texts mentioned above, and a great many others besides, in diverse genres, deserve individual consideration of their narrative structure and means. There was already tacit recognition of this by some academics in Byzantium. Polymaths, encyclopaedists, and philologists, like Photios, Michael Psellos, and Eustathios, to name but three of the better known, trained their philologically astute eye on some aspect of narrative in the texts they studied. Ancient and later, Byzantine, teaching regarding narrative development, moreover, has been partially preserved in exercises known as *progymnasmata*, notably polished collections of which have survived, suggesting that narrative virtuosity became increasingly sought after for its own sake in some periods when arts and letters flourished.

People will tell stories, and when those stories become important enough to their sense of who they are, and what they can know about their world, past and future, they may become increasingly self-conscious about the appropriate form those stories should take. The prevalence and importance of narrative form to Byzantine identity, the manner in which it underwrote so many aspects of self-definition, as well as meaningful representations of larger realities, makes narrative so vital an object of study.

FURTHER READING

Current interest in Byzantine narrative may be gauged by the recent publication of Burke 2006. For narrative aspects of Byzantine historiography, see also Odorico, Agapitos, Hinterberger (eds) 2006.

Scholarship about literary narrative is now legion. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (H. Porter Abbott 2002, Cambridge) contains useful, if incomplete, bibliographies for key themes about narrative across different media; see especially the list on p. 183. Useful entries about individual aspects of narrative may be found in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (D. Herman, M. Jahn, M.-L. Ryan (eds) 2005, London).

On aspects of (Western) medieval literary narrative, limited in their application to Byzantine literature but useful nevertheless, see Davenport 2004. Dated but still instructive are Ryding 1971 and Bekker-Nielsen et al. 1979. For a stimulating example of the value of narrative analysis of medieval historiography, see Partner 1977.

On the subject of reading and reception of literature in Byzantium, see Cavallo 2006. For a broader approach to reception, see the now canonical *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (H. R. Jauss, transl. T. Bahti 1982, Minneapolis). On the question of cognitive reception of narrative generally, see *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (D. Herman 2004, Nebraska). For an exemplary application of narratological insights, highly pertinent to Byzantine reception of biblical narrative models, see Sternberg 1985.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Byzantine Book Culture

Judith Waring

Books are a physical manifestation of human communication. They are important not only for their textual content, but also as products of a social, economic, and political context, that is, their cultural history. So what can be said about books in Byzantium?

Throughout the political lifetime of the empire from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries, books were written and "published." Copies of texts were commissioned; books were bought, sold, and donated; read, copied, and ignored; lost, stolen, and destroyed. Leaving aside the pre-printing production and distribution processes, this scenario is conceptually a familiar one. It reveals that book culture in Byzantium was a dynamic phenomenon, with evolving technologies reflecting the changing needs of readers and their wider society. Within Byzantine studies, book culture conventionally has been understood in terms of historical episodes which more or less map onto the division of Byzantine history in its early, middle and late periods. Correspondingly there are three main episodes. The parchment codex superseded the papyrus roll of classical antiquity in the late antique/early Christian period (although rolls made a comeback in the transmission of the Church's liturgical texts in the twelfth century). During the ninth century, there was a shift away from the writing of a text in capital letters (majuscule) to a lower-case script (minuscule). And from the mid-eleventh century (although there is debate on this matter), another medium began to gain ground on parchment with the introduction of paper, which was used increasingly for book production from the thirteenth century. These events have, at best, a rather hazy chronology, but they can be seen to be indicative of a quieter, ongoing process in the way the Byzantines expressed and circulated their ideas across the centuries during which their state existed. The emergence of new technologies does not in itself suggest "revival" or (an anachronistic) "renaissance" in a broader cultural context but a continuing process of development with peaks and troughs. Innovation is more gradual in its realization than any neat historical narrative usually permits.

While key events can, of course, suggest a sketchy outline for the historical existence of a book culture unique to Byzantium, there are also a significant number of gaps in the evidence. The majority of books produced in Byzantium have not survived; the methods and logistics of medieval book production are not at all clear; and extant manuscript books have been studied selectively by the specialists, primarily those lavishly produced for the wealthy élite. This chapter aims to take a more inclusive view of the vast topic of book culture, although the material presented here is itself necessarily selective. The basis for that selection is justified on the grounds that it covers neglected sources of extant evidence with an emphasis on non-imperial court contexts, in particular the monastic milieu. The chronological focus is that of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, although not exclusively, because evidence, both historical and modern critical, is, at present, more readily available for this period. The collections and use of books by the leading "celebrity" Byzantine scholars of their generation have already attracted learned assessments (Wilson 1996; Lemerle 1971). While intellectual fashions in Constantinople undoubtedly created ripples throughout the wider social strata, equally well, what happened "out of town" in less affluent contexts offers an additional perspective on how the Byzantines acquired and used their books. Assessing book culture has implications beyond the detailed study of the manuscripts and documents as historical objects, and contributes to debates on literacy and education (Holmes and Waring 2002).

Sources

Manuscript books themselves are an obvious place to begin. It has been estimated that approximately 60,000 manuscripts in Greek survive from Byzantium and its cultural afterlife (Richard and Olivier 1995), with significant collections located in major libraries. An estimated 15,000 manuscripts are housed in the libraries of the monasteries of Mount Athos (the "Holy Mountain") in northeastern Greece. These statistics imply that more than a quarter of surviving Greek manuscripts have a monastic provenance, if not origin. In very general terms, the subsequent histories of the various types of book produced in Byzantium depend significantly on their perceived status. Luxury manuscripts were those books commissioned by the imperial retinue and those of the intellectual élite, such as patriarchs and archbishops, and high-ranking court officials. De luxe volumes form the basis of collections, for example, in the Vatican and Paris (together around 10,000 volumes) and have enjoyed disproportionately higher survival rates. These books were produced to a luxury specification in terms of the quality of materials used and the skilled copyists and artists employed to transcribe the text and create the decorative programmes. The content of these books further reflects that same exclusive market; those educated in a Byzantine version of the seven liberal arts, after the inherited Greco-Roman tradition of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). But many of these volumes too had resided in monastic collections until European monarchs such as François I of France dispatched agents

to acquire fine manuscripts for the royal collections during the sixteenth century. This tradition was continued into the latter half of the nineteenth century by the British government (book lists in Coxe 1858). The study of de luxe manuscripts forms the basis for much of the current thinking on book culture (see the array of specialist research in Prato 2000).

The remaining books within the monasteries have been those, broadly speaking, that contained explicitly religious material from biblical texts to liturgical works, hagiographical texts on the *lives* of saints, and a vast range of patristic writings of the church fathers and religious anthologies. Some of these volumes are also de luxe items which were produced through donations of, and bequests by, wealthy patrons. The majority, however, are books designed to be used in the everyday running of a religious community. They were often written by a copyist who was not a professionally-trained scribe. In dated colophons of extant manuscripts ranging from the mid-eleventh to the twelfth century, there are eleven scribes who refer to themselves as calligraphers (*kalligraphoi*). A Vatican manuscript (Vat.gr. 866), without a date but most probably written in the twelfth century, contains a number of martyrologies. The colophon identifies the name of the scribe through a word puzzle (an acrostic, or *alphabetikon*) which spells out "NIKOLAOS," using the first letter of each line (Evangelatou-Notara 1982: 222). In a line under the acrostic, Nikolaos describes himself as a *kakigraphos*. This term (orthographically more "correct" as *kakographos,* but perhaps that is part of the joke) is literally the opposite of a scribe with beautiful handwriting, *kalligraphos*, namely a scribe with awful writing; in modern Greek the word means a "scrawler" or "scribbler." The quality of the parchment used in the majority of these everyday books is not vellum, the best quality, and there is usually no decorative program and certainly no work by an "artist-scribe." Book covers (bindings) were functional, that is, they protected the textual content, rather than acting as an aesthetic enhancement. In Byzantium, there is no evidence for the use of gold tooling, and book titles were not tooled on the covers or spines. The only types of book guaranteed some kind of extra adornment and expense are those containing the Gospel lectionary, the *Evangelion*. *Evangelia* are usually recorded first in book inventories with some description of their appearance.

So why have such manuscripts often been overlooked in discussions of book culture in Byzantium? Obviously as historical artifacts they are perceived as low status with no particular artistic merit. They are not fine examples of their kind, and so were less sought after by "connoisseur" collectors whose books were subsequently incorporated into major research libraries. Religious content, while no doubt respected, was not of such academic interest to the generations of classically-educated scholars who had access to manuscripts. And it is this issue of access that seems to have been a major hurdle for Byzantinists. Catalogs of books housed within monastic institutions have been slow to emerge, with the medieval records of books in extant Byzantine archives often being even less accessible. Administrative records were produced as a listing, a type of "stock-take" of all of the books, including donations within a monastery, as well as in documents such as wills which recorded books bequeathed (incomplete handlist in Bompaire 1979). These documentary texts offer a rich

resource for anyone trying to get behind the intellectualizing influence of the book culture of the literary highbrow and attempting to identify a broader written culture, one which was potentially accessible to many more people.

A variety of what are termed "surrogates," that is, primary sources which indicate the existence of books but which are not in themselves books, occur in the form of inventories of property (*brebia*), usually dated, and incorporated into documents such as those mentioned above. But the use so far of archives in the telling of Byzantine history has been tentative, not only because of issues of access, but more crucially because of the loss of material from the highest social level. The bulk of the extensive imperial and patriarchal administrative archives have vanished (on the remains see Dölger 1924–65; Grumel 1932, 1972). Archives were doubtless destroyed in the conquests of 1204 and 1453, and the documentation produced by the exarchate of Ravenna in Italy, dating from the mid-fifth to mid-eighth centuries, is a solitary survivor. For the ninth to fifteenth centuries, less than 1,500 original documents exist (Oikonomides 1997a). Losses also resulted from the deliberate purging of documents by Byzantine administrators themselves with the destruction of material no longer considered to be "live," that is, relevant (what might be called "records management"). Most extant documents continue to reside within the distributed archives of monasteries in Greece, including Mount Athos (*Archives de l'Athos* 1937–), at Meteora in Thessaly (Bees 1911), and at St John the Theologian on the island of Patmos (Vranoussi 1980; Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1980).

Together with a few public documents such as imperial decrees (*chrysosbulls*) and decrees of the church, archives include private papers such as foundation charters (*typika*), wills (*diathekai*), and deeds of sale and exchanges (*praktika*), many of which contain or have appended inventories of property. *Brebia* record information on land owned, on associated revenue from horticulture and/or livestock, as well as goods like household possessions (the "family silver"), which sometimes included books. Issues of physical access to this monastic material, with rules on the restriction on women, on editorial permissions, and on political sensitivities have complicated research; but the situation is improving. An edition of 159 original private documents in Greek among other material from a medieval archive with its origins in southern Italy is an example of recent availability of these types of sources (Rognoni 2002). All but six of these 159 documents are dated, with the earliest from 1037, the latest from 1352, and the majority (116 documents) dating to the twelfth century.

The lack of access to material generally has curbed important research into the presence and role of cartularies (*diplomataria*) (Medvedev 1983). However, one area where the Byzantines seem not to have complicated matters is that of "forged" documents. Some forgeries do exist, such as a thirteenth–fourteenth-century dossier from a monastic community on the island of Lemnos established by the monastery of St John on Patmos, but the deliberate full-scale faking of records became prominent only from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, with a high point in the sixteenth century after the empire had fallen (Oikonomides 1997b). Given that some medieval documents and books do remain, how can we go about constructing a more balanced view of Byzantine book culture from this primary source material?

Methodologies

Statistically, 60,000 extant manuscripts would seem to be a reasonable number from which to reconstruct both individual and institutional collections of books, and to try to identify centers of book-copying activity. This has been the main methodological approach used by palaeographers and codicologists. Art-historical analysis of illuminated manuscripts is included in these terms, and collectively the disciplines form the archaeology of the book (Hunger 1989). An extant manuscript is analyzed and described in respect of a number of common features. These features include a description of the copyist's handwriting (script) and any decoration from headpiece designs to full-page portraits and narrative cycles. Also considered is the arrangement of the text on the page: justification dimensions (the area which the text occupies) are measured; the number of columns the text is written in; and the number of lines per page are counted. The number of pages (folios) is noted, as well as the composition of the quires (booklets formed from parchment or paper and sewn together to produce the whole book or textblock). The medium is recorded; in Byzantium this included papyrus, parchment, and paper by the mid- to late-eleventh century, when copyists of books followed the trend of using paper initiated by administrators in the state bureaucracy from perhaps as early as the ninth century (Oikonomides 1977). Bindings are described in terms of both their appearance and techniques of production, namely how the textblock was sewn onto its covers: the techniques used in Byzantium were those originating from Egypt, from the Coptic monastic communities of "the Desert" (Szirmai 1999: 62–92). Surviving comparative evidence is limited, however; according to a survey of 4,700 Greek manuscripts in the Vatican, only 94 of these books retain their original bindings and none predate the eleventh century (Federici and Pascalicchio 1993). The fashion among later collectors for rebinding their books uniformly after the style of their day partly explains this situation. Descriptive features conclude with provenance: if there are any colophons identifying the copyist, these data are added, together with any indications of ownership, and later annotations (see the description of the manuscripts in Constantinides and Browning 1993). However, information on provenance is vague for the early history of a manuscript immediately after its production, and colophons were often copied with the text in subsequent productions of a book.

Given this potential wealth of data on offer, it is surprising that further analyses of the collected descriptive information have not as yet revealed any general patterns in book production. Byzantium, it seems, produced books through a non-regulated, idiosyncratic small-scale "publishing" economy practiced at a local level. Such widespread diversity is reflected in the fact that palaeographers and codicologists have been unable to identify particular techniques of production within a secure chronological or geographical context (Fonkić, 1980–82; Hutter 1995 on manuscripts from Bithynia).

How then can documentary texts, in particular inventories of property, expand on the current thinking about book culture in Byzantium? Before considering any information from these sources there are one or two methodological issues to address.

Medieval book inventories are not "catalogs," as we understand that term, certainly from the nineteenth century onwards. In monastic archives, these lists of books were probably incomplete, and therefore technically "inaccurate" as bibliographical records; at worst they are often illegible and incomprehensible. Another issue arising is that texts were frequently copied and/or bound together in a single volume at the request of a "customer" or for the purposes of preservation. This type of composite manuscript would not have had its full table of contents listed in an inventory. The Byzantines had a great affect(at)ion for anthologies and collections of all sorts of texts, and there is an example of a volume dating from the second half of the eleventh century (Paris supp. gr. 690) which contains 94 texts. An inventory would have listed only the title of the first text, and occasionally the last, with the remainder being omitted. Such incompleteness gives an unbalanced view of the texts which were available to, and being circulated by, an audience.

This shorthand way of recording books stems from the main administrative purpose of the exercise, namely to identify physically the individual volumes, not to catalog them. In an (unpublished) inventory of over 300 entries from the archives of Patmos dated November 20, 1307 (Figure 21.1), there is an entry recording 17 books all containing a copy of the text of the Four Gospels (*Tetraevangelion)*. The title of the text obviously could not be cited as a means of identifying what were in effect the same books, so the list's compiler distinguished between volumes by describing their bindings in some detail. This additional information on the appearance of bindings is particularly important because of the lack of extant original examples as previously mentioned. An administrative function which inventories did not perform was to record the cost of the volumes listed. There are very little data on cost in general, and the surviving information, which is mainly from colophons, is chronologically scattered (Kravari 1991). If Patmos ms. 218, dated September 1166, can be viewed as in any way "typical," it seems in general terms that around two-thirds of the total expenditure was on materials, for the parchment and for the binding and the fee for the copying of the text; the remaining third was for extras such as musical notation.

Inventories of property record books, and they also present other incidental socio-historical data, including the type (register) of language used in a non-literary document. Language register varies within the corpus of archival documents, and educated, trained copyists were by no means solely responsible for much of the production of material in monastic archives. On a more general point, language register has proved a potentially confusing factor in the discussion of Byzantine literacy. While there is a clear classical tradition in the literary language of Byzantium, and while there are elements of oral transmission and reception in literary works originating from the vernacular spoken language "of the people" (*dimotiki)*, the non-literary writings in these monastic documents sit comfortably in neither category. Literacy skills cover a broad spectrum from a basic ability to read and/or write to the production of *belles-lettres*. If these documents can contribute anything to the debate, it is that a literate individual was not just someone who had been schooled in how to read and write in the archaic language of the ancients. What is sometimes termed "functional literacy" (Mullett 1990c), namely an ability to read and/or write to a level sufficient

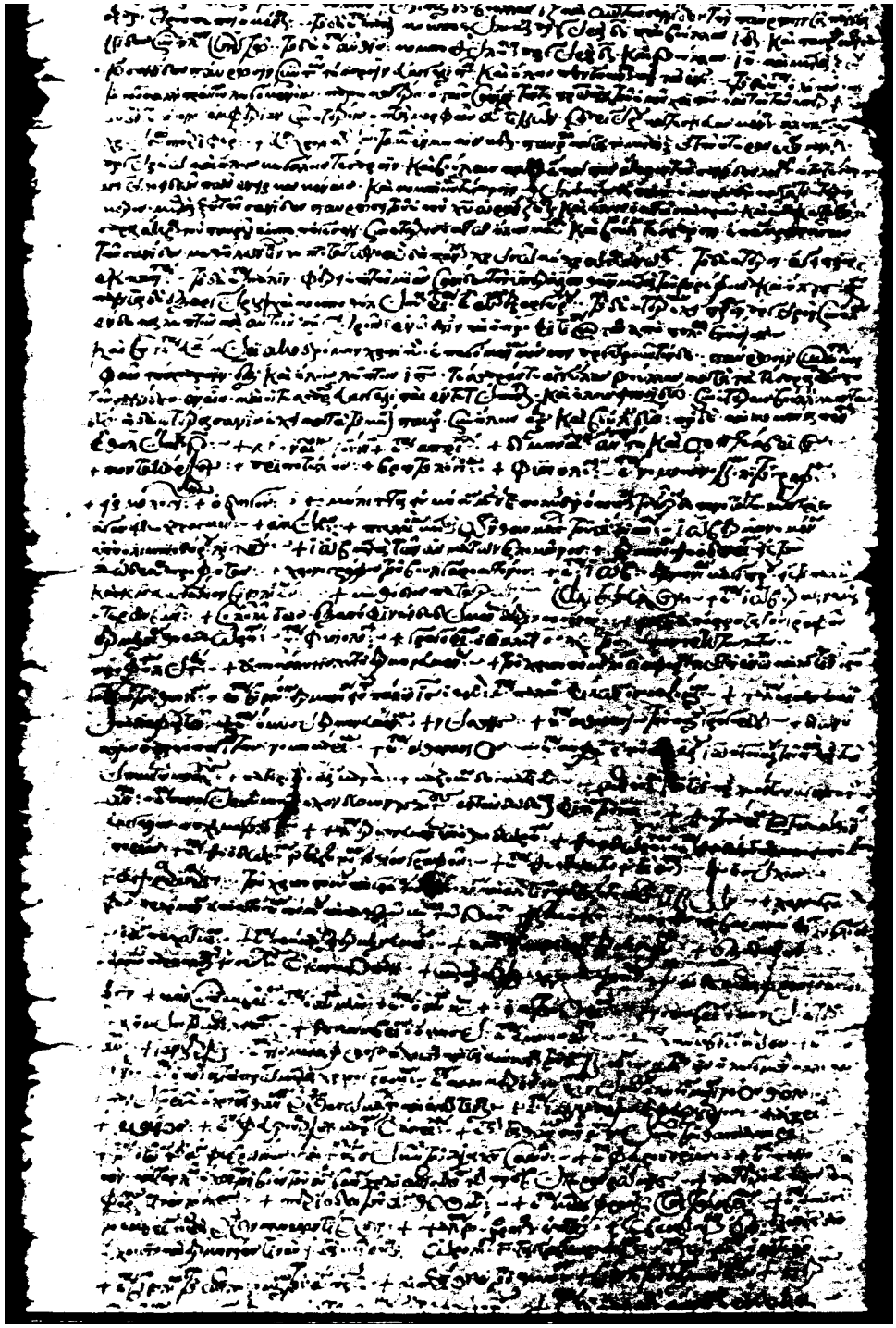


Figure 21.1. Unpublished catalog from Patmos, November 20, 1307. Paper Roll.

for communication purposes, is on display within the context of archival documents. There are two extant medieval copies dated c.1270–74 of the will of Theodosios Skaranos, known as the monk Theodoulos, in the archives of the Athonite monastery Xerapotamou (Bompaire 1964). Copy A is probably the original and B is a version made about thirty years later. Why was a second version required? Both texts have the same content and both use the vernacular extensively. But Copy A verges on being incomprehensible in its orthography and syntax, with the use of accentuation described by its modern editors as "eccentric," while B is more grammatically "correct" and readable. The copying of the will is an example of the monastery's administrators requiring a redrafting of the idiosyncratic language in an original document to produce a second version which clarifies meaning and makes the content accessible.

The Cultural History of a Byzantine Book: John Klimakos and the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*

How can we exploit these sources more specifically in our understanding of book culture? One way to examine the use of book inventories as a social historical resource is to select a title from Byzantium's "published output." The work selected should be composed within the chronological scope, and circulated across the geographical span of the empire. To counter bias, the chosen title cannot be one appropriated by a particular socio-economic or ethnic group to the exclusion of another. These criteria therefore reject overtly theological and liturgical works which were the preserve of the ecclesiastical elite and its professionals, along with literary works of antiquity read and circulated by a small network of Constantinopolitan intellectuals.

A work which meets these requirements is the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*. This text is a spiritual (rather than a "religious") manual; abstract virtues and vices are explored through the metaphor of ascending the rungs of a ladder. Each step is a personal challenge, and on reaching the top rung (number thirty), the climber achieves the goal of unity with the divine. It is, in effect, a self-enlightenment book, a "popular" genre with a long history in European literature. In Byzantine literature, the theme is not unique. A precursor was an edifying collection of texts known as the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (*Apophthegmata Patrum*), and in turn the *Ladder*'s legacy is present in works such as the tenth-century *Life* of Basil the Younger. This narrative has Basil's soul on its journey up a ladder to heaven with 21 toll gates (*teloneia*) where there are resident demons who consult ledgers in which sins have been entered (Kazhdan and Constable 1982: 150).

The *Ladder* was not written in Constantinople, but in Egypt, by an author called, after his work, John *Klimakos*, John "of the Ladder." After 40 years spent in contemplation in the Desert, Klimakos became the *higoumenos* (abbot) of the monastery of St Catherine's, Mount Sinai, where he died in office around 596. The *Ladder* was written in Greek in the late sixth century when Egypt was still part of territorial Byzantium, and it was copied and circulated for the subsequent fifteen hundred years. It is a "classic" of the Byzantine literary corpus, with an appeal which appears to have

been universal. There was a sizeable readership if the extensive numbers of extant manuscripts gives a secure indication of supply and demand, although book ownership does not automatically equate with the reading of books.

The text began to be copied almost immediately, and from the ninth century, translations from Greek start to appear. The *Ladder* was translated into Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, and Russian, with the earliest Latin version produced in the thirteenth century (and printed in Venice in 1518, a hundred years before the Greek edition). This makes it a publishing phenomenon of translated literature, a medieval "international bestseller." The title is recorded, for example, in a list of books in Georgian in an inventory dated December 1083 from the monastery of the Theotokos *tes Petritzonitisses* in Bulgaria founded by Gregory Pakourianos, a Byzantine military commander (*BMFD*: II, 507–63). St Catherine's itself still holds 15 manuscripts; 8 of these are from the twelfth century and earlier. There are 14 copies of dated minuscule manuscripts cited in the corpus produced by the Lakes (1945 index), and only works by the Church heavyweights St John Chrysostom and St Basil of Caesarea are more numerous. Some copies were de luxe and lavishly illustrated (see Martin 1954; and on the production processes behind a commissioned copy see Corrigan 1996), others were decorated with only the schema of the ladder (Figure 21.2), and some were copied with the text unadorned. As mentioned above, although inventories usually list the work as a single entity, generally the *Ladder* was accompanied by some other texts (CPG 7850–53). These include all, or combinations, of the following: an exchange of letters between John Klimakos and another *higoumenos* "colleague," John of Raithou (modern Tor on the gulf of Suez), who prompted the writing of the text; an anonymous prolog; a concise *Life* of Klimakos by a near-contemporary biographer, Daniel of Raithou; and a homily entitled *To the Shepherd*, which Klimakos addressed to John of Raithou. This latter work concerns the office of *higoumenos*, and it occasionally appears as an extra (31st) rung of the ladder. A commentary tradition (*scholia*) survives, and although its chronology and authorial voices are not at all transparent, its (early) existence further suggests a widely read text.

The title of the work is not uniform within the Greek redactions. In the main medieval book list from the monastery of St John on Patmos, a document composed on a long roll of paper in September 1200, there are six copies recorded variously under the titles *Ladder* and *St John of Sinai to his monks* (Astruc 1981). It was also sometimes called the *Spiritual Tablets* (*Plakes pneumatikai*). In the ninth-century *Life* of Euthymios the Younger, there is a direct reference to "John of the Ladder," a man who knew every virtue and who wrote them all down in an organized fashion on a tablet (Petit 1903: 199), a mixed biblical reference to Jacob's ladder and Moses' stone tablets. Klimakos himself is variously named John "the learned man" (*Scholiastikos*) and John of Sinai (*Sinaites*), but the connection with his text is his usual epithet.

In visual terms, in a well-known manuscript of pseudo-John of Damascus's *Sacra Parallela* (Paris gr. 923), produced during the first half of the ninth century in either Palestine or Italy, Klimakos is depicted in a medallion (f. 146r) in the company of John of Damascus and Maximos the Confessor. Various "spin-offs" appeared, and

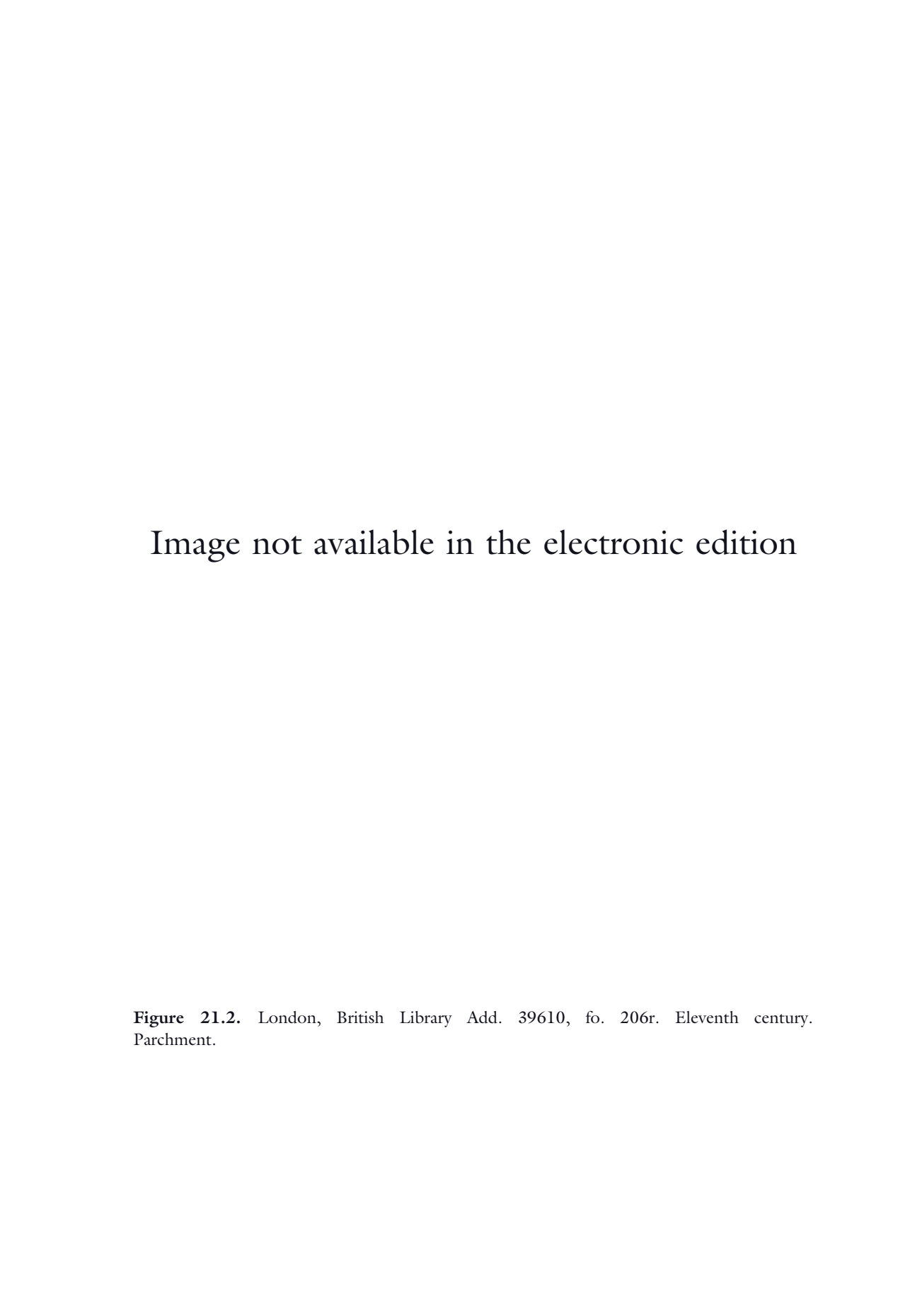


Figure 21.2. London, British Library Add. 39610, fo. 206r. Eleventh century. Parchment.

depictions of Klimakos and representations of his work are shown in a variety of other media. On a (now incomplete) eleventh-century processional cross (the "Cleveland cross") he appears on the right-hand arm beside Anastasios of Sinai (Evans and Wixom 1997: 60–62, cat. 24). The textual content has been depicted on frescoes and icons. There are cyclic frescoes showing the spiritual progression of monks ascending the ladder on the walls of the refectory (*trapeza*) in the Dionysiou monastery, Mount Athos, and in many monasteries the text itself was read in the *trapeza* during Lent. While extant icons of the *Ladder* are normally from the post-Byzantine period, a twelfth-century one survives in St Catherine's (Evans and Wixom 1997: 376, cat. 247).

In these contexts, the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* is much more than just another text: it featured in a variety of cultural media which were accessible not only to those who could read. Individuals who did not have direct access to books or who had a copy of the *Ladder* but did not possess the social skill of reading would know of the text and its author through images; and for those within the confines of the monastic life, the text would be known through communal reading. Later writers alluded to the *Ladder* and directly quoted from it to validate their own work and choice of subject matter. One example occurs in Niketas Stethatos's *Life* of the eleventh-century "mystic" known as Symeon the New Theologian, in which he refers to Symeon reading at home his parents' copy of the *Ladder* (Niketas Stethatos: Hausherr 1928: 12–13 lines 21–4). Symeon's theology expounded a revised perspective on the importance of the experience of the individual, and Stethatos endorses his hagiography of Symeon with this reference to the *Ladder*. There are quotations from the *Ladder* in monastic writings ranging from the ninth-century testament of Theodore of Stoudios in Constantinople to the eleventh-century regulations of Nikon of the Black Mountain, near Antioch, as well as some attributed quotations in the *typika* of the imperial foundation of the monastery of the Theotokos *Kosmosoteira* at Bera in Thrace (all in *BMFD*). By the time these documents were composed, Egypt had been lost to the Arabs, although St Catherine's maintained an Orthodox presence. Perhaps the difficult contemporary political situation surrounding the area where the text originated gave it an added attraction and value.

The post-medieval history of the *Ladder* is a story worth telling briefly as it throws light on more general issues of book culture, namely the transmission and reception of a text. There is no modern critical edition of the *Ladder*. The available Greek edition is a reprint of the seventeenth-century *editio princeps* published by the Jesuit scholar Matthaeus Raderus in Paris in 1633. Rader consulted eight Greek manuscripts as sources for his edition, a very small sample of the survivors. An independent edition also exists from the late nineteenth century, published in Constantinople in 1883 by the Athonite monk and solitary Sophronios. The first English translation available in the public domain appears to have been that by a monk of Mount St Bernard's Abbey in Leicestershire, published in London in 1858; it is more of an incomplete paraphrase than a translation. An English translation was published in 1959 and was reprinted to include the subsidiary, homiletic text, *To the Shepherd* (Moore 1959). A further English translation was published in 1982, but it contains none of the subsidiary texts (Luibhéid and Russell 1982). This glance at the modern bibliographical

biography of the text and translation of the *Ladder* contrasts sharply with its medieval production, transmission, and reception. Why is there still no critical edition? The lack of an edition cannot simply be explained away by the complex manuscript history of the text, as Rader attempted it nearly four centuries ago. It can, however, be explained by considering the textual content, which is abstract and philosophical, and as such offers no historical facts for Byzantinists in terms of names, dates, people, and places. This is a major issue surrounding how we "read" Byzantine literature. Despite our views, the Byzantines were producing copies of the *Ladder* in significant numbers, and it clearly had acquired a status within their literature. Books were not easy or quick or particularly cheap to produce, especially if a text was commissioned, so the number of surviving manuscripts of the *Ladder* is surely indicative of considerable demand.

What do the inventories record? Copies of the *Ladder* present in book inventories reveal information on potential audiences that cannot be discerned from looking at a single manuscript in isolation. The Patmos inventory of 1200 recorded six copies. The first two are listed under those books made of parchment, and the remaining four are listed as being composed of paper. One argument could be that the choice of medium, which is used in this inventory as an overall means of ordering the books, indicates some difference in function. Books required for public reading were probably produced on parchment for greater durability; books produced on paper were perhaps destined for private, meditative reading. But the two parchment copies here are both described as small books, while size is not referred to for the four paper copies, with one of these volumes further identified as "old." None of the recorded Patmian Klimakos paper manuscripts have survived, which seems to provide conclusive evidence on relative durability. The library has three extant eleventh-century complete copies, all of which are on parchment (Sakkelion 1890: nos. 121, 122, and 124).

Patmos, an imperial foundation, administered a number of outlying dependent and less affluent communities (*metochia*) throughout the Dodecanese islands and the coastal mainland of Asia Minor. On the back (verso) of the 1200 catalog is some information on how books circulated beyond a major center. This "lending list" is dated to c.1244 and records the loan (but not the return) of books from the main monastery to *metochia* and to individuals (see Waring 2002 for a detailed study). It included two copies of the *Ladder*: one was given to the revered (but unknown) Sabas; and the second, a paper manuscript, to the father of the monk Maximos on Crete. The recipients would seem to suggest an audience previously unrecognized within the cultural history of the Byzantine book.

This readership expands if the search for the text is extended to include *brebia* contained in private wills which corroborate the popularity of the *Ladder*. In a document of November 4, 1098, the nun Maria, who was Kale Pakouriane, the wife of Symbatios Pakourianos before she became a nun, distributed her estate including her books among family, friends, and the Athonite monastery of Vatopedi. Maria specified that her copy of the *Ladder* should go to her cousin Leo Diabatenos (Lefort 1990: 179 line 25). Eustathios Boilas was an exiled court official who lived and died at the eastern edge of the empire in Edessa, Syria. In his surviving will of April 1059,

in favor of the monastery of the Theotokos *tou Salem* which he himself had founded, Boilas has his scribe, the monk Theodoulos, record, together with other property, his book collection (Lemerle 1977: 15–63). Among the 58 entries are two copies of the *Ladder*. The will was written at the back of one of these two copies (Paris, Coislin 263, fo. 159–65v.), an unusually convenient example of the convergence of both book and documentary sources. This particular manuscript is illustrated with an author portrait (fo. 9r.) and a facing portrait of the commissioning sixth-century patron of the text, the *higoumenos* John of Raithou (fo. 8v.). Sandwiched between both portraits are two folios presenting a table of contents of the text based on the depiction of a ladder. Boilas thus commissioned a copy of the text in the tradition of John of Raithou, and his close association with John of Raithou in these portraits could be seen as an attempt to rehabilitate his legacy from exile. In a final example, the *Ladder* occurs in the will of Maximos in favor of the monastery of the Theotokos at Boreine, a family foundation near Philadelphia in Asia Minor. The document is dated November 1247, and is possibly the autograph, but it is more likely a contemporary version (*BMFD*: IV, 1176–9). Unlike Boilas, and the nun Maria, who were relatively affluent individuals, Maximos was the son of a charcoal burner and presumably of more modest means. None the less the book list has 112 entries and includes three copies of the *Ladder* under the property of the main church of the monastery (the *katholikon*).

These examples of medieval inventories originate in a variety of geographical locations throughout the empire from Bulgaria to Syria and all recorded copies of Klimakos's text. What then are the implications for book culture in Byzantium when different audiences emerge from this type of documentation?

Byzantine Book Culture

In the Byzantine world, archival material can offer that missing link between the use of books by intellectuals at Constantinople and their use by other individuals of more modest status scattered around the empire. Such individuals have not written histories of their times nor left any literature or literary criticism for posterity. However, they did compose non-literary documents in a language much closer to the vernacular, recording a wealth of information on the social and economic context of the use of books which has often been obscured by lack of evidence from other sources. Few of these individuals were in a position to afford to commission beautifully produced books including a self-promoting donor portrait. Only the exiled Eustathios Boilas, perhaps because of his fall from favor, emphasized how important his de luxe volumes were to him; in addition to the evidence of his extant copy of the *Ladder*, he described his sumptuous *Evangelion* as precious and priceless. The emphasis on the appearance of these books indicated how Boilas saw himself in the world. He might be located at the edge of empire but his books reflected his true standing.

Another group of book users present in documentary texts are women. Women, except those of imperial rank, seemed to have been without a voice in book culture, and the relative dearth of female writers in Byzantium is testimony to this. But in

monastic archives there are documents recording the independent material wealth of women, such as in the will of Maria/Kale who owned books. Boilas too noted in his will that while the monastery received his books as a bequest, his daughters must still be allowed access to them for singing, reading, and learning. And in the Patmian "lending list," an edifying text is recorded as being on loan to a certain *kyr* Sabas's mother-in-law.

Another previously silent group of book users within Byzantium is that of non-Greek-speaking communities. Gregory Pakourianos's book list clearly indicated that only the *Evangelion* was in Greek and the remaining books including the *Ladder* were all translated into Georgian. There are implications for literacy in this document, particularly the role of bilingualism and translation within an empire which was multilingual. This is an integral aspect of understanding the processes of transmission and reception of a work like the *Ladder*.

In considering the cultural history of Byzantine books this chapter has examined some specific contexts through the documentary evidence for the presence and use of a given text. More generally, while the production of books in Byzantium seems to have been a small-scale activity carried out within local economies, the cultural reverberations of a "bestseller" extended empire wide.

FURTHER READING

Book use and production in the terms discussed in this chapter is an area barely covered (see Holmes and Waring 2002). Art historians have considered book production in the case of luxury manuscripts (e.g. Lowden 1992a and b) and in terms of the actual manufacture. Diversity of production is reflected in the fact that palaeographers and codicologists have been unable to identify particular techniques of production within a secure chronological or geographical context (for an overview see Fonkić, 1980–82; and the case study by Hutter 1995 on manuscripts from Bithynia).

PART IV

Some Questions in Material Culture

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Archaeology

James Crow

Archaeology may be defined as the study of the human past through an understanding of material remains. The physicality of the archaeological evidence sets it apart from the recorded past. In a real sense it is mute, lacking the immediacy of text, but the physical statement of objects and buildings provides a constant and tactile memory for contemporary society. Among the various archaeologies of the Mediterranean world, Byzantine archaeology has not fared especially well. Cleansed from the Parthenon to reveal the glory of classical Athens, Byzantine remains and monuments rarely take the center stage in the major archaeological sites of the ancient world (Loukaki 2008). With the notable exceptions of the great monuments of Constantinople and Thessalonike, or the medieval town of Mistra, the physical relics of the Byzantine world have been at the best neglected and in many cases demolished to reveal earlier structures and stratigraphy. Outside of Greece, and now Turkey, the subject is taught in few universities and there are very few general introductions (Rautman 1990; Zanini 1998; Paliouras 2004; Dark 2004).

Yet archaeology as a distinctive discipline has made a contribution to the understanding of the Byzantine world, and increasingly there is a much greater awareness of how the study of buildings, historic landscapes, and material culture, including ceramics, will produce differing and wider perspectives of the past. The recent *Economic History of Byzantium* makes extensive use of archaeological evidence throughout (Laiou 2002).

Historical Methodologies

Any discussion of the character and development of Byzantine archaeology needs to recognize the associated disciplines of Byzantine art and architectural history. All three are concerned with differing aspects of the material world of Byzantium, and their study ultimately rests on the physical traces of past structures, artifacts, human

landscapes, and environments. Although each subject can be informed by historical texts to illuminate and contextualize past perceptions and motives, ultimately they are each rooted in the physical survival of differing categories of remains from the past. A consequence of these symmetries is that the investigation of Byzantine archaeology has often been conducted by scholars with a range of backgrounds, and this has given rise to differing and changing definitions of how the discipline of archaeology is understood. Thus, in Britain before the First World War, it is possible to identify three distinct approaches. The first is one which draws from the experience of a museum curator, O. M. Dalton of the British Museum, who published his *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* in 1911. This was a handbook of early Christian and Byzantine art and artifacts, covering an impressive range of material from the visual arts of wall paintings, mosaics, icons, and manuscripts, to the "minor decorative arts," including coins, metalwork, glass and ceramics, and architectural decoration. Apart from wall paintings and mosaics that still remained *in situ*, most of what he described was drawn from the collections and catalogs of international museums, and included categories of evidence often excluded by Byzantine art historians today. Second, the archaeology of buildings and especially churches was represented by the researches and travels of scholars such as Gertrude Bell, whose work with William Ramsey recorded the Binbirkilise ("1001 Churches"), one of the major stone-built settlements in central Anatolia. Above all, Bell was concerned to establish a taxonomy of churches, by recording, documenting, and classifying ancient buildings, but with little concern of why they were built or how they were used (Ramsey and Bell 1909; Kleinbauer 1992). Third is an approach exemplified by a number of scholars associated with the British School of Archaeology at Athens in the decades before the First World War. This demonstrated a broader interest in the material culture of the Byzantine world, often set within the context of what would now be termed the "long-term history" of the Hellenic world, reaching from prehistory to recent times (Kleinbauer 1992: xlvi–xlviii). One work which exemplifies this is F. W. Hasluck's study of Kyzikos (1910), which includes not only a study of the monuments, topography, and epigraphy of the classical city, but also extends to the Byzantine and later Ottoman monuments in its territory. From this can be seen the beginnings of an approach to landscape archaeology and history, no longer confined to specific monuments or objects. The examples cited are drawn from British Byzantinists, but similar approaches can be replicated in the work of other European scholars at that time, such as Josef Strzygowski and Charles Diehl.

Chronology

Archaeologists have different definitions of Byzantine archaeology in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean. For those working in Jordan, Israel, and Syria, but also Egypt, the term is defined as the Christian period in the Eastern Roman Empire from the Tetrarchy (c.AD 300) to the Arab invasions in the 640s, a period which many others would prefer to describe as late antique rather than Byzantine, and for which a specific archaeology has emerged (Lavan and Bowden 2003). For the purposes of this introduction, however, the period begins in the later sixth-century and continues

to the final conquests of the Ottomans between 1453 and 1461. Further, we need to consider the geographical definition of Byzantine lands; in this chapter, these are confined to a core area of the modern republics of Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria. A good case could be made to include parts of Italy, Albania, the southern republics of former Yugoslavia, the Crimea, and Cyprus, but for brevity they are excluded, although specific studies will be noted as relevant. Each of these three core states emerged from the Ottoman empire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Finkel 2005), and in each there were differing responses to the creation of new national identities, which in turn had a direct influence on the divergent character of the developing archaeologies of Byzantium found in each.

National Agenda

In contemporary Greece, although the Byzantine past is seen as a core element of the national identity, Byzantine archaeology is organized separately from the archaeology of the prehistoric and classical periods, both in the museums and in the administration of state archaeology, the regional ephorates, thus maintaining a dichotomy in Greek culture between the classical and the Christian medieval pasts. A consequence has been that classical and earlier periods have often achieved greater significance to the detriment of the study and preservation of the Byzantine past (see Kotsakis in Meskell 1998: 54–5; Loukaki 2008 provides a critical analysis of the continuing dichotomy in conserving Greek heritage; Kourelis 2007 examines the emergence of Byzantine archaeology in the 1930s). In addition, until recently, there has been an overwhelming emphasis on ecclesiastical archaeology; this is not surprising given the background to the foundation of the main museum and of the discipline as part of the wider European interest in early Christian archaeology (Frend 1996; Konstantios 2004: 9–13).

In Bulgaria, independent from the Ottoman empire after 1878, medieval archaeology has fared better as part of the wider national agenda, with benefits for the wider field of Byzantine archaeology. The medieval First and Second Bulgarian Empires were seen to provide a legitimacy for the new Bulgarian state, and, from the late nineteenth century, the centers of the early kingdoms at Pliska, Preslav, and later Turnovo were the focus for major excavations, although since the majority of the reports are in Bulgarian, the full significance of these has not always been recognized (see Mijatev and others 1974). In Sofia, medieval antiquities are divided equally between the National Archaeological and National Historical Museums, with major regional collections at Preslav, Shumen, and Veliko Turnovo (Evans and Wixom 1997: 321–35), while medieval Bulgarian and Byzantine archaeology are components of the National Institute of Archaeology.

The republic of Turkey is the most recent of these new nation states (1923), and although it is defined as a secular state, the population is predominantly Moslem following the population exchanges after the Treaty of Lausanne (1922) (see a survey of Turkish archaeology by Özdoğan, in Meskell 1998: 111–23; and for the disjunctions with Greek archaeology see Ousterhout and Bakirtzis 2007: 1–6). The prehistoric archaeology of Anatolia has played a crucial role in the creation of a new

Turkish national identity, most clearly displayed in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, where only limited exhibits of the classical and later periods are presented in opposition to the wealth from the more distant past. In contrast, the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul is a late-nineteenth-century foundation and represents the wider possessions of the Ottoman empire, and at the same time it exhibits the treasures of the Byzantine city. Public archaeology is administered through regional museums, and Byzantine archaeologists remain under-represented, although recently has there been a growth in the number of degree programs in Turkish universities which include Byzantine archaeology and art history. In addition, until the last decade, with few exceptions (notably Semevi Eyice and Yildiz Ötüken), the majority of projects concerned with Byzantine archaeology were led by foreign academics, either as part of long-term projects such as the Austrian excavations at Ephesos, or of specific monuments like Alahan, studied by a British team. With the rapid expansion of universities in Turkey over the past decade, this situation has significantly improved, and in addition, numbers of Turkish graduates have studied in Europe and elsewhere, ensuring a broader approach to the national archaeology.

Archaeological Approaches

Like all academic disciplines, the study of archaeology has been transformed over the past three decades by new theoretical perspectives often drawn from literary theory and social anthropology (see Greene 2002 for a clear introduction to archaeological method and theory). Any study of archaeology may be divided into a number of categories depending on the types of sites and monuments, the techniques which have been used for their investigation, and the range of differing artifacts and other material recovered from survey or excavation. Furthermore, we need to consider the various approaches to the physical evidence and the differing understandings and interpretations which can then be derived. The archaeology of the Byzantine world is a historical archaeology, set in a chronological framework, informed by texts. A simple way of using this evidence is to allow the archaeology to illustrate the historical narrative derived from written sources; an example of this is the way that, in the past, biblical archaeology was seen to demonstrate and support the biblical texts as fact (Silberman, in Meskell 1997: 175–88). Archaeologists and textual historians have come to recognize that the relation between text and material culture is altogether more complex and potentially more enriching for an understanding of the past. Both sides have narratives, one derived from text and memory, the other from the physical narratives of structures and artifacts. To understand the relationship of these is to engage in an equal dialog, not to prefer one over the other.

Settlements and Places, I: Villages

Archaeologists often distinguish between sites as defined places of human activity represented by archaeological deposits and artifacts and landscapes, the physical

Figure 22.1. Skeleton excavated from the later church at Kilise Tepe in Isauria. The bones can be dated by radio-carbon dating to the late twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

setting for human activity, which is the product and interaction of both natural and human agency. In Byzantine archaeology, through the influence of historical geography, and notably the project of *Tabula Imperii Byzantinii*, initiated in Vienna over 30 years ago, the emphasis has been on sites, since unsurprisingly this is what the texts record. Sites can be divided simply by situation between rural and urban. Inevitably, the early middle ages (600–850) is least well represented in the chronological cover, but what is clear is that for Greece and Bulgaria there is some evidence to document the structure of village houses and village material culture (Pitarakis 2005 for metalwork; Vorderstrasse 2005 for patterns of coin distribution and loss). However, if the fabric of the Byzantine world was made up of villages (Howard-Johnston 2004), archaeologists in Anatolia have done little to illustrate or investigate them. Until very recently there have been virtually no published excavations of villages, except as part of the work on earlier sites such as the Hittite capital of Boğazköy (Neve 1991) or more recently at Bronze Age Kilise Tepe in Isauria (Postgate and others 2007) (Figure 22.1). Other rural settlements are known at Binbirkilise and at Karacadağ, northwest of Konya, where Bell published surveys of the churches, although the overall site plan was lost by Ramsey (Ramsey and Bell 1909). Significant changes are, however, affecting the nature of archaeological discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean, and two can be noted. Recent excavations before the construction of the new Eleftheris Venizelos airport outside Athens revealed a range of settlements, dating from the prehistoric to later medieval times and including an early-medieval to mid-Byzantine village, the plans and finds from which are now displayed in the Airport Museum. Excavations in advance of the constructions of the major BP pipeline across eastern Anatolia to Mersin also investigated a medieval village northeast of Kars (Durrani 2005: 53–4).

Rural settlements can also be located from surface surveys and survey archaeology, especially in Greece, and this technique has made a significant contribution for the understanding of the distribution and change of settlement in the context of multi-period studies. Among the most important recent surveys have been the surveys in Boetia directed over 20 years by John Bintliff (Bintliff 2000); others include Armstrong 2002 in Lakonia, and Baird 2004 in the Konya plain, as well as ongoing surveys in Anatolia associated with the Sagalassos project and with excavations at Haci Musular in northern Lycia.

Settlements and Places, II: towns

A major concern for archaeologists and historians in the early-medieval period (seventh to ninth centuries) is the fate of the classical city. Views differ about whether this should be understood as an end or a transformation (see the review of the historical and archaeological approaches in early-medieval Italy in Ward-Perkins 1997). The archaeological and historical evidence allows a number of interpretations (Wickham 2005: 626–35; Haldon 1999), although discussions are not always sufficiently nuanced in recognizing regional diversity from the Adriatic to eastern Pontus (Hodges 2006: 184–5). It is important to recognize that there is greater diversity in the range of evidence than is frequently admitted; for Anatolia we simply do not have clear archaeological evidence from cities like Iconium or Caesarea, and very little for major centers such as Ankyra or Nicaea. A case can be made that the monumental archaeology of city defences and a few major churches either represents effective resistance and the maintenance of urban centers with an effective imperial administration (Howard-Johnston 2004) or alternatively "the hollow parodies of a classical town" (Hodges 2006: 185). The excavations at Amorium reveal continuing economic activity (Lightfoot 2007; Ivison 2007), and it is important also to recognize how some urban centers came to take on specific functions but did not necessarily conform to the pattern of *città ad isole*, like some cities in the west which "had gone over the edge into deurbanization" (Wickham 2005: 676). Without the archaeology of early-medieval housing (Dark 2004), as is now known from Rome at this period, it remains difficult to contextualize the surviving Christian and defensive monuments from Byzantine *poleis*, or cities (Crow and Hill 1995; Crow 1996 on examples from Amastris and northern Anatolia).

Middle Byzantine and later towns are more readily understood from surviving remains such as Mistra and Geraki in the Peloponnese and from excavations at Corinth (Ousterhout in Wixom and Evans 1996: 192–9; and late Byzantine and Ottoman housing, Sigalos 2004 and Vionis 2009). In Anatolia, the excavations at Amorium reveal settlement and economic activity up to the late-medieval periods, but elsewhere investigations from this period are more restricted, and the neglect of the Byzantine past in Anatolia is matched for Seljuk and later periods (see Özdğan, in Meskell 1998: 119), where the main academic interest until recently has remained art historical.

Monuments

Fortifications were an important element in the urban and rural archaeology of the Byzantine lands. Urban defences have already been noted: the only synthesis is Foss and Winfield 1986, although the second part of that study is more concerned with establishing a chronology of building styles than trying to understand the purpose and role of fortifications in Byzantine society. This field is, however, developing, and Bakirtzis and Oreopoulos 2001 consider not just the form of fortifications but also the economic and symbolic aspects of their construction. Rural defences are considered in the volumes of *TIB*, and it quite clear from these and other studies (e.g. Dunn 1999; Crow 1996) that some represented intervention by the state as part of imperial system of security, while others were centers either of local refuge or of regional power. An exceptional study considering these themes in a regional setting is Bryer and Winfield's account of the monuments of the Byzantine Pontus (1985).

Churches are certainly the best-documented single type of building, known from both architectural surveys and excavations. Architectural historians have tended to privilege the buildings of the elite over those more ubiquitous structures (Ousterhout 1999) found throughout the Byzantine world, although the recent study of Canlı Kilise in Cappadocia sets the freestanding church in the context of a broad range of rock-cut buildings (Ousterhout 2005). A recent development is to consider churches as part of their wider setting, whether urban (Ousterhout 2000) or rural (Nixon 2006). The construction and repair of churches may be viewed as one of the general signs of economic life as well as an indicator of specific patronage (Ousterhout, in Brubaker and Haldon 2001). An outstanding problem is the limited availability of detailed databases of churches or associated remains to draw upon; see, however, the survey of ecclesiastical sculpture from Bithynia by Ötüken 1996 or the recent guide to the churches of Naxos (Mastoropoulos 2007), which provides for the first time a nearly complete catalog of the churches and their decoration. This latter study also reveals the extent to which art historical research into the internal decoration has militated against a fuller study of the buildings within their social and landscape context. Such studies can lead on to wider debates relating to the religious world of Byzantium, including the consideration of pilgrimage, and the sacred and profane (see Gerstel 2005; Maguire et al. 1989; Nixon 2006). Finally in considering monuments we need to remain aware of how past monuments and places continue to be negotiated, contested, and re-imagined by contemporary communities (Costa and Ricci 2005).

Landscape archaeology can also contribute to an understanding of land use and changing land tenure, although such studies have been rarely applied in the eastern Mediterranean, except in those areas such as the Pontus or the Cyclades, where there are documents surviving from the later-medieval periods. Similarly there has been limited application of environmental archaeology to the scientific study of landscape changes, especially in those areas outside the Aegean basin. One potential area for research is the use of irrigation, known from monastic and other texts (Gerolymatou

Figure 22.2. The reconstructed fragments of an eighth/ninth-century amphora of the "Byzantine globular" type, representing a survival from earlier Late Roman forms of LR 1 and 2. Found from excavations of a late antique and Byzantine olive-press at Pyrgos Cheimarrou, Naxos. Amphorae of this type are also known from excavations in Constantinople, Crete, and Aigina, and are indicative of continuous long-distance trade in the Aegean.

2005), although until now fieldwork has been confined to Cappadocia (Bicchi 1995). On a more monumental scale, the successful maintenance of the late-antique aqueducts of Constantinople reveals the continuity and development of classical hydraulic technology which provided a model for the later Ottoman city (Crow et al. 2008).

Studies of Byzantine ceramics have already been noted, and the strengths of the traditional art historical approach are apparent in the exhibition catalog entry from the Metropolitan Museum's 1997 show, *Glory of Byzantium* (Evans and Wixom 1997: 255–71; study guide with an extensive bibliography, Vroom 2005), although the full potential for the study of pottery as a source for the economic life of the Byzantine world has yet to be realized. Vroom, Vionis (2003, 2007) (Figure 22.2) and others are beginning to explore the social archaeology revealed through the study of material culture, including ceramics and metalwork. Ceramic evidence from field survey has been effectively combined with historic sources in Armstrong's study of Byzantine Lakonia (2002). An important additional source for trade and technology is provided by underwater archaeology. A number of wrecks have been excavated off the southwest coasts of Turkey, especially Yassı Ada and Serçe Limanı, dating respectively to the seventh and the eleventh century (Kingsley 2004). Closer to Constan-

Figure 22.3. Excavations of a tenth-century boat at Yenikapi, Istanbul, 2005.

tinople, Günsenin's excavation off the island of Proconessus in the Sea of Marmara has shown the scale of trade in wine-carrying amphorae in the tenth and eleventh centuries. On the southern shore of the city itself, since the summer of 2005, excavations on the site of the Harbor of Theodosios have revealed the remains of over 33 ships, some up to 30 m in length, grounded in the silt of the Byzantine harbor. Their decks and holds still contain the daily cargoes of the time, amphorae, small finds, smashed pots, together with rope and other organic remains (Figure 22.3). The site remains under excavation into 2009, but it serves as a vivid reminder of the potential which archaeology can provide for a wider understanding of the life of the Byzantine world.

FURTHER READING

On daily life, see the recent publications by Rautman 2006; on housing and material culture in later Medieval Greece, Sigalos 2002 and Vionis 2009 are very informative; and on ceramics, Vroom 2003 and 2005. A number of the studies in Henning 2007 can help to provide a fuller picture of the wealth of remains from Pliska and other early medieval sites in Bulgaria, although the interpretations are often at variance with current scholarly opinion in Bulgaria. Research

on the Byzantine village has developed dramatically with the publication of the papers from the session on villages held at the International Byzantine Congress in Paris in 2001 (Lefort et al. 2005). These cover each of the three core countries and much more beside. Finally, the collection of papers on a range of rural themes, including defended places, villages, and burials, Vorderstasse et al. 2009 is an important review of recent excavation and research in Anatolia.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Makers and Users

Anthony Cutler

Charged with writing a chapter about the history of Byzantine art, the historian will (or should) recognize at once that the chapter cannot be directly about the topic, but will, of course, be about what others have written. Unless he believes in the illusion that there is "out there" not a possible history but *the* history of Byzantine art—a Platonic idea waiting to be realized, unchanged and unchangeable—his words, like all those written before him, can be only a gloss on earlier glosses. He is a maker not of history but of historiography. Primarily, then, he is a user, one who turns earlier glosses to his own purposes.

This inevitably bears generally on the situation of the historian in the twenty-first century, and specifically on the shape of the following text, which assumes the form of a diptych, an essay that is in two parts—one on makers of art, the other on its users. The division is, of course, a fiction made for heuristic purposes, one in which there is no reason to trust, given that the makers of Byzantine art and those who first made use of it were, necessarily co-dependent. (No less necessarily we shall look at later users, viz. ourselves, toward the end of the chapter.) If the historian is lucky, if he gets it right (or at least says something useful), the points he makes will in turn be glossed, used by others. Yet even if he gets it right, his words, along with most of the millions of others that have been written about Byzantine art, will necessarily sink. They will no doubt be printed on paper said by the publisher to be "suitable for recycling," which is not only a nice irony but a material observation directly germane to the material set out below.

Makers

Two of the points most often asserted about Byzantine artists are, first, that they knew a much larger proportion of ancient and late-antique art than we possess of the total body of their production, just as late antiquity possessed, for example, many

more poems by Sappho than we know today. Their presumed awareness, and our relative ignorance, is proclaimed scarcely less often than the second point, the lack of specifics about artists' careers—and not least their names—, a fact that is supposed to limit our understanding of their creations. If we are prepared to concede the first point, it may be that the second is a mercy: at least it spares us the biographical obesity that so afflicts histories of modern art, details that are used to sustain the belief that an artist's works can (and should) be understood through his or her life: the dates of their birth, the training they received, the jobs they were given, the voyages they made, all niceties that can obscure the larger cultural issues at stake.

Now it may be that the emphasis on such issues in recent writing about Byzantine art is a way of compensating for the absence of detailed information, but there seems little reason to dispute the view that works of art, like rituals, theological systems, and so on provide human beings (as the anthropologist Victor Turner saw) with a set of templates or models that serve, at one level, as periodic reclassifications of reality and of their creators' relationship to society and to nature. Works of art can incite people, including other artists, to action as much as they can reinforce or revise their systems of belief. Instances of behavioral change can be inferred from evidence for the reception of architectural innovation, as when a contemporary chronicler (Marcellinus *comes*, AD 528) records that early in his reign Justinian, who would later be faced with riots in the Hippodrome, refurbished his seat there: "the imperial box and its ancient throne designed for viewing and applauding the contests in the hippodrome, making it more elevated and brighter than it had been before." Even when responses to visual change are undocumented, it takes little effort to assess the impact of such acts of invention as that of the painter at Kurbinovo who, in 1192, created the literally fantastic Ascension on its apsidal arch. Here the cosmic background, painted in a blue grisaille behind the risen Christ, is peopled with beasts—a rampant lion, wading birds, and several kinds of winged fish—in striking contrast to the stark, uninhabited circles of the Ascension at Hagia Sophia in nearby Ohrid a century and a half earlier.

Far more common than such acts of zoological and teratological imagination was the imposition—on walls, vaults, and portable objects—of scenes drawn originally from the New Testament but expanded to include a vast body of saints and latter-day Christian iconography that at once elaborated, down to the viewer's own lifetime, on the repertoire of sanctity and affirmed the agency of divine providence. This was achieved most conveniently by the promulgation and perpetuation of hosts of angels, shown either attending scriptural figures or directly supervising human affairs. Much more numerous were the ranks of holy men and women (several thousands of whom are named in Orthodox calendars) whose human form on walls and implements offered no impediment to belief in their heavenly habitation. These creatures offered their presence, protection, encouragement, and exemplary comportment to those who observed them. It mattered not in the least that many of the greatest and most widely diffused saints (Demetrios, Nicholas, George, et al.) were what the critic Tzvetan Todorov has called *hommes-récits*—people who had no character (or even a life) beyond their depiction in hagiography and its visual expressions.

The fact that there appear images of this sort rather than the darker aspects of Byzantine society—murderous successions to the throne, the ephemeral terrors of

plague and famine, the ubiquitous phenomenon of slavery—should occasion no surprise. Such horrors were no more represented by Byzantine painters than their Venetian counterparts, from Carpaccio to Tiepolo, chose to represent their government's tight hold on its citizenry, the informers that enabled this control, and the violence to which their information led. Sufferings in the mosh pit of Hell appeared in scenes of the Last Judgement, but transient disasters like floods (as in the archangel Michael's Miracle at Chonae), and earthquakes and martyrdom (as in the *Menologion* of Basil II) were treated as occasion for saintly intervention or church-sponsored commemoration. Human scourges such as barrenness were manifested, for example, in the prayers of St Anne and Joachim at Daphni, in the shape of answered pleas and the implication that divine agency is the only sorce of remedy.

Byzantine artists presumably subscribed to such beliefs no less than those who paid their wages. No contracts survive to attest to transactions between the two groups, although it seems reasonable to postulate some version of the arrangements between painters and patrons that we know from the medieval West and later societies. Much more troubling than the rarity of evidence for these pragmatic relations is our utter ignorance of the beings who mediated between employer and employee, who (we assume) introduced the elaborate theology that is often perceived as underlying the layout and execution of schemes of decoration. Those mysterious creatures, rather desperately described by art historians as "programmers" or "designers,"—the clerisy responsible for devising intellectual content—may be an unavoidable assumption. But it should be pointed out that no Orthodox equivalent is known for the individual who performed this role in the Upper Church at Assisi, a learned scholar who, with Bonaventura's *Legenda maior* in hand, guided the painters depicting the life of St Francis (Mitchell 1971). In this particular instance, the artists, like the man who guided them, were Romans, so a case can be made that on occasion painters and the ideas they embodied shared a common origin.

Yet it can also be argued that the pursuit of an artist's origin is one of the sillier endeavors undertaken by Byzantinists (not to speak of historians of Crusader art for whom this desire seems to have become an all-consuming passion). Does it really matter whether, late in Justinian's reign, the abbot of Sinai chose to outsource the commission for his apse mosaic; or that, six hundred years later, the lust for impressive icons similarly drove the monks to turn to Constantinople? The export-import business may be interesting to economists, but even were these guesses verifiable, what would be gained from certainty on these points? It is depressing to discover in the work of a senior art historian observations on the quality of some icons at St Catherine's and their consequent attribution to the capital; and a relief to find at the bottom of the same page a disclaimer (or contradiction?) that undoes the speculation hovering above it, the ringing declaration that such arguments are unsatisfactory when they rest on subjective ideas of quality of execution (Cormack 2000: 147).

Matters of "quality" aside, the rage to identify the style of a particular master seems an especially pointless (and anachronistic) pursuit, given that it is at most his working methods that are detectable (Cutler 1994). Labels of this sort represent an attempt to evade the trap set for us by Byzantine artists, whose productions were, designedly, in the words of W. B. Yeats, "the work of many that seemed the work of one."

Although groups of objects can be recognized if and when they are solidly grounded in technical resemblances (e.g. in materials and the craftsman's approach to them), associations posited on grounds of style serve little useful purpose and can distract from more important questions such as the meaning intended or reception enjoyed by a particular work. (Statisticians know as apophenia the error of detecting meaningless patterns in randomly assembled data.) Particularly discouraging in this regard is the fall-back position embraced by those who are not quite sure whether two or more pieces are by the same hand, and resort to hypothetical "workshops" in order to explain perceptions of kinship. There can be no doubt that mosaicists and the painters of larger churches worked in teams, but where smaller objects are concerned, attempts to recognize "groups" are usually unconvincing and more often than not supererogatory. In this domain most often asserted is the existence of state-sponsored institutions. Although throughout the history of Byzantium the mint remained a function of government, and a few texts of the ninth to twelfth centuries allude to state workshops manufacturing arms, sails, and other strategic materials, to suppose that works of art came into being in this way is an unfounded extrapolation of what in any case is a shadowy model of production. The notion of governmental *ateliers* has been contested with respect to both Byzantine and south Italian art (Cutler 1994: 66–74; Corrie 1996). To carry this hypothesis to the next stage by calling such workshops "imperial" is to build upon a house of cards, and, an unjustified elaboration of the praise lavished upon their respective "heads of state" by both Byzantine and Muslim writers who conventionally attribute consummate artistic skills to their rulers (Theophanes Continuatus 450, ch. 22; Rashid al-Dīn 3: 667).

The realities of art-making that are available to us are humbler things, and better known through scrutiny of the objects that we possess than through texts by authors for whom such activity was of passing interest. Whatever the theology that undergirds a sumptuous object like the Crucifixion enamel at Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich, it was its great size (250 × 180 mm) that enabled the iconographic expansion of this standard image. The three soldiers disputing the possession of Christ's robe are sometimes (though still infrequently) found in other versions of the scene; so too, its dimensions allowed the presence of a second grieving woman as well as the vase that receives the emission from Christ's side, a rare motif that could mean that the plaque was part of a reliquary of the Holy Blood (Hetherington 1983: 9). But ultimately the presence of these elements signals the decision to expend a huge amount on the plaque: the total weight of the gold sheet is 430 grams. Conversely, we can recognize economies made if not at the behest of the patron, then through the artist's awareness of the value of old materials that were still useful. Fire-damaged gold tesserae from older monuments were reused for the sake of their red undercoating (Witte-Orr in Lightfoot et al. 2004: 368–370; James 1996: 25). Plaster could be used to simulate steatite, as on an icon of St Nicholas in Athens. And the backs of ancient wood panels provided serviceable supports for new creations, as when a ninth-century St Marina, formerly in the Metropolis of Paphos, became a St George, mounted and fully armed, a favorite type of the fourteenth century.

Practical considerations of this sort operate for the most part below the radar of modern scholarship and on wavelengths unheeded by those of the Byzantine period

who wrote about art or, in their images, concentrated on its ideological connotations rather than the means by which they were embodied. Described as a painter in the New Testament, St Luke was celebrated as the patron of artists, a paradigm for those who followed the craft. One such is represented on the job in the *Sacra Parallela* (Paris, Bib. Nat. Ms. gr. 923, fo. 328v.), but it is the icon on the wall rather than its maker that is the miniaturist's real concern. This can be interpreted either as the finished product of the artist's apostolically sanctioned trade or as a demonstration of the fidelity with which he emulates his model. The latter reading would bring the image closer to the realm of Byzantine theory than to actual practice, for there is little reason to assume that craftsmen normally copied extant objects, let alone that they worked with an exemplar in hand. Their models were more likely in their heads than on the table, imprinted there by experience and cultural convention.

Scholars have repeatedly argued that painters availed themselves of model- or pattern-books, despite the non-existence (or failure to survive) of such tools. These, it is said, help to explain the supposed similarly of their creations and, more broadly, the famous "conservatism" of Byzantine art. Ideological factors are indeed germane to this issue, but the ideas in question relate not so much to the "fidelity" of the artist as to the expectations of his clients and the society that they inhabited. Convinced of the paradigmatic value of ancient imagery, patron and painter conspired, as it were, to insert motifs like the "happy peasant" into a late-twelfth-century copy of a patristic homily (Athos, Panteleimon, cod. 6, fo. 37v.), recapitulating the musical shepherds known from late Roman bucolic manuscripts and the sheep drinking at a stream as they occur, for example, in the Paris Psalter (Weitzmann 1963: col. pl. 3) made two hundred years earlier. Use of the motif required not access to the "antiques" in question but simply the will to draw on what the critic Martha Gellhorn has called "the compost of the mind," that is, the mental reservoir which was part of the artist's stock-in-trade. Art historians find nothing odd in the practice of later painters—Pontormo, Boucher, and Renoir among them—whose repertoire is reducible to a handful of types. Why they find it remarkable when a Byzantine artist did the same is unclear. And just as Pontormo and Renoir were unconcerned with representing individual personality, so a theme such as the Dormition of the Virgin with its established cast of mourners would arouse in the mind of the painter nothing more complicated than the limited sequence of types who conventionally figured in the scene. Unexciting as this conclusion may be, it explains the (to us) curious belief of the Byzantines in the realism of their art (Cutler 1974). Certainly it possesses more explanatory value than the view of an early-twentieth-century scholar who supposed that the mosaicists of Hosios Loukas and Daphni, in presenting their galleries of hook-nosed Eastern holy men (in fact, no more hook-nosed or Eastern-looking than those in scores of other churches) were responding to the influx of "Orientals" (Persians and Armenians) into the courts and administrations of successive emperors (Bertaux 1901).

To insist that procedures of this sort detract from the artist's "originality" is to argue in terms not so much anachronistic as irrelevant. It is also to ignore the painter's magpie talent (a skill by no means limited to Byzantium) to reuse what he had seen elsewhere. Worse, it ignores the larger setting of his craft, the building as a whole where these motifs were assembled. The layout of churches after the ninth century

and their programmes of decoration were as familiar to their users as the saloon was to the newly arrived cowboy in old Westerns. One "set" might differ from another in size, degree of elaboration, and decorative detail, but each offered a pair of swinging doors at the entrance, a piano, and a long bar with a mirror behind it, ready to be shattered at an appropriate moment in the performance. What we might characterize as predictability would be taken as dependability, its close relative, and an ingredient of religious faith in medieval Greece as in other societies. The worshipper in the church of St George at Kurbinovo would be reassured by the lamentation over Christ's body that his Lord had died on the cross no less than when he gazed at the similar image at nearby Nerezi, painted a generation earlier.

Remembrances of this sort—indeed the analogical structures of programs as a whole—make clear that schemes of church decoration embodied an essential concept, yet one which metastasized rather than remained a local invention. It is not to be doubted that artists went walkabout taking with them not only what they had seen elsewhere and they themselves had previously replicated, but also the ability to adapt these experiences to diverse situations. But to be preoccupied with distinguishing between "hands," and to plot the movement of the bodies to which these were attached independent of the political, social, and economic circumstances that impelled such motion, is to suppose that the arrangement of the deckchairs on board the Titanic was a critical factor in whether the ship would sink. Concern with the manner of their disposition, i.e. the way objects came into being, has always attracted more interest than their much longer afterlives. For this reason, two related aspects of artistic production are normally neglected. The first is the matter of Byzantine repairs, work necessitated by the impact of regular use of an object across the course of centuries. A late-eleventh-century icon of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste at the Great Lavra on Mount Athos bears on its back an inscription noting that it was restored in March 1197; and indeed close examination of the piece shows that contours of its five figures had been cut out and transferred to a new wooden panel with a gold background (Acheimastou-Potamianou 2002: 151). The fate of thousands of images must have been similar—even if not so assiduously recorded—and especially when an object was badly made and had suffered further from time, weather, or simple human carelessness.

About the notion of bad art, in the sense of works poorly fabricated, there need be little debate—which is also perhaps the reason why it is so little discussed. Suffice it to point out that out of the dozens of Byzantine ivory diptychs and triptychs that survive (implying the hundreds, if not thousands, that were made), only one retains its original hinges; most exist in the form of lonely plaques long abandoned by their original partners. This survival rate suggests an aspect of cabinetry never mastered by the Greeks. On the other hand, the notion of bad art in the sense of things that are ugly or, at best, incompetently made is likely to provoke cries of protest from those who never saw an icon that they didn't like. Properly, perhaps, such opinions belong in the second section below, where our responses to Byzantine art are discussed. But ultimately they redound to the maker's discredit: to argue otherwise would be to separate entirely our opinion from the act of craftsmanship, an absurd position even in an age that espouses the utter relativity of aesthetic judgment.

There is no point in drawing up a "B-list" of Byzantine artistic performances, although near the top of such a list would have to be placed a recently discovered icon of the Virgin and Child, possession of which is currently in dispute between British and French claimants, but whose merit is apparently validated by a private collector's successful offer of £1 million for it (*Sunday Times*, December 4, 2005). The transparent mandorla around the messy-looking Child and held in place by the beefy hand of his distracted Mother may well be a theologically significant sign. If so, it is clear that the ancient Greek bond between truth and beauty had vanished by the sixth century AD. Ivory carvings of this era, and particularly the serially produced consular diptychs, exhibit similar technical incompetence. Of some of these, the most charitable thing that can be said is that it is good that the carvers provided the protagonists with chairs, the only element that allows us to understand that they were intended to be read as seated. Clearly, as in the case of the footstools that furnish groundlines for later images of Christ and his saints, their makers aspired to convey gravitas but lacked any interest in suggesting gravity. Virgins on ivories tilted at a slight angle to the universe; the resurrected Lazarus looking more shrink-wrapped than shrouded (in the great Paris Gregory Ms. Gr. 510, Brubaker 1999: fig. 24); Abraham in the mosaics of Monreale encountering a swarm of epicene extraterrestrials intended to be understood as angels, all suggest that those who treated them in this fashion were impelled by purposes other than realism and sustained by a system in which technical competence counted for little. That responsibility for such oddities cannot be laid at the door of Christian belief is clear from the character of the secular, so-called scientific, illustration thrown up for this society: we find an extraordinary cure for displaced wrist bones in a tenth-century version of Apollonios of Kition's treatise *On Joints* depicted as a sort of male strip club in which athletic therapists are endowed with everything desirable except penises (Florence, Bib. Laurenziana, cod. Plut. LXXIV, 7, fo. 197r.); Hercules and his companions in a contemporaneous version of the Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica* (Spatharakis 2004: figure 51) are no less genitally challenged. If as I have suggested, the degree of fineness of a work is of little use in determining its date or place of origin, the quality of its craftsmanship still has much to tell us about attitudes towards representation, and the definitions of that term, in Byzantium.

Users

The very fact that the Byzantines saw their art as realistic, employed this concept as a criterion of excellence, and used lifelikeness as a term of praise for achievements they admired suggests the utility of separating their responses from our own. Reason to believe that their view was not mere cultural self-deception is suggested by Muslim sources, starting with al-Jāhiz (d. 868) and continuing at least until al-Qazwīnī (d. 1285), who described the Byzantines as having "great skill in painting; they paint the human figure laughing or weeping, jubilant, or sorrowful." But for our present purposes, the discrepancy between the way the Greeks looked at their art and the way we see it poses difficulties enough. Byzantine insistence on the verisimilitude of

images that appear lifeless to us could be considered a form of the Stockholm syndrome, with the hostage-viewers being complicit with their captor-artist. But the situation is more complicated. One of the main problems is that viewers, iconophile and iconoclast alike, conceived of the issues with which they were engaged in terms of *noumena*, concepts intelligible to reason rather than to the senses, whereas we respond to Byzantine images in terms of *phenomena*, that is, their sensible, physical characteristics. This latter attitude effectively disqualifies us from recognizing, first, the efficacy and, second, the emotive content of their art.

We may be unimpressed, even bored, as we survey a sequence of identikit haggard saints, frozen in old age like Jonathan Swift's Struldbrugs, and doomed never to die. This attitude fails to comprehend that the very likeness of such holy figures—both to each other and to themselves when they occur in other settings—was proof to the Byzantines of their authenticity. H. G. Wells's *Invisible Man* had to put on a suit when he wanted other people to know that he was present. Byzantine artists were obliged to do the same for saints they portrayed. These were recognized, at least generically, by the clothes they wore: monastic, military, or otherwise. Within these groups, further distinctions were made by giving them attributes: Mary Magdalene, for example, is usually shown with the pot of ointment with which she had anointed Christ's feet. There is a famous story of a Greek emissary to the Council of Florence-Ferrara who declared that he could not recognize the saints on the walls of the Latin church that he visited. Particular individuals could be identified by their devotees through their inscribed names, data on which many scholars depend, even though on many occasions and in many media inscriptions are lacking. We do not know if this absence is due to negligence, haste, or uncaring on the part of the artist. In any case, there is little reason to suppose that devotion was withheld from such under-equipped figures. At least in painted churches and in complex groupings like the Triumph of Orthodoxy icon in the British Museum, whose inhabitants are not overtly identified, the force of their holiness came through as a result of their collective presences.

Whether represented as individuals or *en masse*, the test that the saints had to pass was whether they were "real," a quality which, as we have seen, has nothing to do with their realism. More interesting than the handful of texts that proclaim this to be a fact are records of the ways in which icons functioned, performances which have been summed up economically by Robert Nelson: "in practice, they are regarded as persons" (Nelson 1999: 83; Nelson 1989). Beyond the myriad examples cited in hagiography of cures effected, disasters averted, and miracles worked on behalf of their users are those instances in which icons are said to have become virtual humans. One such occasion occurred in Alexandria between 744 and 765, shortly after the onset of Iconoclasm in Constantinople, when an icon of St John Chrysostom, described as resembling the banished patriarch Cyriacus, repeatedly broke loose from its cords, fell onto the assembled company of bishops and leapt around the church in protest against the treatment Cyriacus had received (*History of the Patriarchs*, 3, 1909: 142–3). Much later, but in a similar anthropomorphic role, an icon substituted for the human being who, in the liturgical office of the Three Children in the Furnace, normally hovered protectively over the imperiled Hebrew triad (*PG* 155: 133D; Maguire 2003: 218).

The annual recurrence of events of this sort confirms the useful distinction drawn some 30 years ago with respect to the difference between the miraculous and the marvellous in Byzantine experience (Dagron 1978: 105). The angel (or its image) saving the children from the fire represents a miracle, but, counter-intuitively from a modern point of view, it is also foreseeable precisely because it forms part of the divine plan and is therefore consistently rehearsed. By contrast, the marvellous—the fantastic beasts, for example, who tear each other apart on textiles and sculptural reliefs—is unforeseeable and gratuitous. Events in the first group were what the Byzantines expected; those in the second group surprised them. Much as many people enjoy surprises (in art, if not in nature or war), it was the providential, the regularly repeated, that constituted the subject matter paid for by their primary audience and encountered and expected by those who followed them. So pervasive is this realm that we might speak of the banality of the predictable in Byzantium. And if this is accepted, we can understand how it fits perfectly with that we have seen in discussing the visual diet presented by church decoration and the reassurance that it offered the viewer who had seen its like dozens of times before. Stylistic differences aside (a point touched on below), it was served up ubiquitously and across centuries.

Even, or perhaps especially, the origin of one-off icons was the stuff of literature, and, for those who could not read, of legend. The best known examples are the *acheiropoietai*, images "made without hands" (not even those of St Luke, who was reputed to have painted the Mother of God from life). But this manner of manufacture, far from being a process that had occurred and then stopped in Christian antiquity, continued to generate new stories of ancient, miraculous creations. An addition made after 1270 to the so-called *Georgian Chronicles* relates how Christ after his ascension instructed his Mother to make an image of herself by pressing her face to a panel. This she should give to St Andrew as an aid in his effort to convert the land of Georgia to the faith (Thomson 1996: 355).

The very physicality of the means by which this Mary icon came into being bears directly on a critical difference between the way works of art are experienced now and in their own time. As we gaze at objects in vitrines, or on the walls of churches, it is sometimes forgotten that the wear and tear they display did not occur under museum conditions. Rather, they are evidence of Byzantine use (or perhaps of the less rigorous care taken by their early modern curators). A rubbed ivory, a chipped or candle-smoked panel, a worn piece of ecclesiastical or domestic silver, all are evidence of use. Objects were made to be held, stroked, kissed, as we can see in one of the rare images of group devotion. In the Hamilton Psalter in Berlin beneath a huge icon of the Mother of God mounted on an easel is a smaller version, placed low presumably to receive the kisses of the faithful (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, cod. 78 A9, fo. 39r.). Byzantine objects were (to use an odd word of good Greek ancestry) thigmophilic: they wanted to be touched, an erotic dimension to the experience of art that has all but passed out of modern consciousness.

The tactility implicit in this relation between the observer and the observed may have its roots in the way observation was understood to work in Byzantium, a process recently made clear. The eye was conceived as active, sending out rays that touched the surface of an object even as light, extramitted from the object's (often gilded) surface, sought out the viewer in an attempt to "capture" him or her. Both the eye

and that which it perceived functioned as "hands," just as the extended hand of the observer was understood to embody rays that emanated from his or her optical equipment (Frank 2000: 106–7; Nelson 2000: 150–54). To see the object as animate, and to fear its gaze, are attitudes too often and too simplistically attributed to "primitive" peoples. Many far-from-primitive medieval Christians believed not only that objects were thigmophilic, but also that they could share in the emotional lives of those who venerated them. When news arrived in Syria of the Crusaders' surrender of Damietta to the Arabs in 1221, "the Christians blackened the faces of the portraits in the churches and put soot on them out of sorrow for what had happened" (Ibn al-Furāt, tr. Lyons, 2: 31).

If the Byzantine theory of vision just described is sufficient to support belief in a mutual sympathy, a two-way exchange or dialog between the viewer and the viewed, this would go some way toward an explication of the functions played by mural decoration in churches. We do not know if scenes such as the Healing of the Paralytic, a perennially depicted miracle, or the Raising of Jairus's Daughter, a rarer scene, but one preserved in the *parekklesion* (funerary chapel) of Theodore Metochites' church in the Chora monastery, were associated with rites of healing. But in one case there can be little doubt of the link between the subject of a mosaic and monastic ritual. Christ's washing of the apostles' feet is depicted in mosaic on the north side of the narthex in each of the three "classic" churches (Hosios Loukas, the Nea Mone, and Daphni) of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. In the typikon of the Theotokos Kecharitomene in Constantinople, contemporaneous with the decoration at Daphni, foot-washing by the supervisor of this convent is prescribed for Holy Saturday "in the narthex of the Church where the Washing of the Feet by the Saviour has been portrayed" (Tronzo 1994).

But to limit the bond between art and ceremony to the interiors of religious buildings with fixed spaces for their imagery is altogether too restrictive. We know from both the physical evidence that they provide and texts (often by Arab or Russian travelers to the Greek capital) that panels were taken from the churches that housed them and processed on feast days through the streets. A double-sided icon from Kastoria nowadays celebrated for the obvious awareness of Mary, depicted on one side, of the pathetic humility of her son, on the other, demonstrates the mechanics that enabled such perambulations: mortices cut at the bottom were the site of an attached pole by which it was carried. Scarcely less useful is the evidence provided by the early-twelfth-century Arab visitor, al-Marwazi, who described in Hagia Sophia "a great panel encased in silver and on it the likeness of the Messiah and Mary … in gold and decked with precious stones."

> "They have a day," he continues, "on which they take this panel out of the church. One of the *bābās* carries it on his breast and circumambulates the town with it … And the people gather round him and march before and after him, while they express their humility, weep, distribute alms and compete in charity, until he has walked with the image through the markets" (Minorsky 1950).

As against the limited audience of dignitaries who were vouchsafed a glimpse of the Great Palace's relics (Kalavrezou 1997), urban processions of icons were by no means

limited to a privileged few, and took place in many regions other than Constantinople (Ševčenko 1991). Bearers appear on the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" icon in the guise of angelic deacons, implying a cooperation of celestial powers with the iconophile emperors and saints depicted. It is not without reason that the display of panels and relics has recently been seen as an instrument of social control exercised by the political elite (Pentcheva 2006).

Such highly public use of art differed in scope, audience, and intention from the carefully scripted and circumscribed ends to which were put the sometimes antique silver plates and lamps brought in from nearby churches to the Magnaura when foreign legations were received by the emperor (*Book of Ceremonies* 2: 570–76, 590–92; Featherstone 2007). While no doubt awe-inspiring, these trophies were little more than backdrops to imperial ceremonies, whereas the icons borne in street processions were the centerpieces of teeming rituals: the bilateral image from Kastoria with its overtly affective content, together with al-Qazwīnī's description of Constantinopolitans marching ahead and behind the icon of Christ and Mary, testifies to the huge popularity and emotional engagement provoked on these occasions. As a consequence we can recognize in the "archaeological" and literary documents evidence for a value system quite distinct from that of the clinical reports that are the monastic inventories so prized by historians (e.g. Astruc 1981). These normally start with treasured relics, precious-metal objects gem-encrusted and/or enameled panels and ecclesiastical silks; bringing up the rear of the list are undecorated icons (or, in the Athonite inventories, metal agricultural implements).

In their own time, the "documentary" and the "anecdotal" served different purposes, and must therefore be read differently, even though the latter sort of discourse allows us to probe nearer to the signifying heart of an object's existence. This much said, it must be observed that its existence was often finite: sometimes the shelf life of an artifact approximated that of a skyscraper in Manhattan. Major pieces, especially those made of metal, were recycled, and what we might label a masterpiece could be brutally covered, updated, or destroyed. Marcellinus *comes*, cited near the beginning of this chapter on the "makeover" of the imperial box in the Hippodrome, mentions, for example, the erection in 506 of a statue of Anastasios in the Forum of Taurus. What he does not tell us, but recounted by John Malalas (John Malalas, *Chronicle* 16.13), is that to find the necessary bronze for it, John the Paphlagonian, count of the sacred largesse, melted down several statues that had been brought to the capital by Constantine the Great. Nine hundred years later, many of the frescoes on the walls of Metochites' *parekklesion* at the Chora were, within a century or less after their creation, obliterated by the pretentious carved hoods of tomb monuments set up for the aristocracy in this funerary chapel (Brooks, in Evans 2004).

These two examples suggest that while life may have been short in Byzantium, the life of art could be even shorter. But if this is so, it is the result of an understanding of art quite at variance with our own, one in which it was the community that employed the artist, not the artist himself, who called the shots. This is no less apparent in the Greek countryside than in the major monuments of the capital. Painters working in village churches reduced the number of textual quotations (on the scrolls of the prophets, for example) and increased the number of attributes that a saint

would display, all the better to serve an illiterate audience for whom visual signs worked better than verbal clues (Gerstel forthcoming). In traditional art history, style is considered to be an expression of the artist, whereas, at least in Byzantium, it may be more useful to see it as operating in the field of the consumer, nearer, in short, to the domain conventionally described as iconography. The desire to discover artists' identities led originally to the belief that the ligatures (for Demetrios, Theodore, Michael and so on) found on glazed pots of the fourteenth century represented the names of their painters. Now it is understood that these abbreviations are more likely to refer to saints put there at the client's request, or at least bought because these letters evoked the names of favorite holy protectors (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999: 22 with figures 6, 7).

Whether we characterize the impulse that led to these inscriptions as one generated by a social or, more narrowly, a visual community, the driving force lies always in the second part of the term (Cutler 2002). Once in place, that is, in use, a work of art in a notable situation could serve as a call for emulation. Observed by the attentive, its characteristics would be heeded and might become prescriptive. In these cases its use points as much to social practice as to religious devotion.

This is no less true of the style of an image than of other aspects of its being. We have seen that for the Byzantines this style was always one of realism, a theological as much as an aesthetic concept and one that effaced concern with its originality. In the medieval West, on the other hand, this latter category on occasion came to the fore. Interpreting Suger's building activity, Panofsky suggested that the abbot of Saint-Denis was acutely conscious of the stylistic distance between the existing Carolingian basilica and the new or "modern" structures that he added (Panofsky 1979: 36–7). Whether or not Suger was in fact aware of this difference, I know of no parallel attitude expressed by a Byzantine patron or later commentator with regard to a building or other object. More interesting than the precise date of an artifact, the identity of its maker or sponsor, and even its "source" or "model," is the question of why this should be.

FURTHER READING

On makers, see Cutler 1994. Cormack 1999 discusses artists; see also the entry in *ODB*, "Artists." On users, Nelson 1989 and 1999. On viewers and viewing Byzantine art, Nelson 2000.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Limits of Byzantine Art

Antony Eastmond

In 1997 and 2004, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented two major exhibitions devoted to the art of the Byzantine world. Following on from the *Age of Spirituality* (New York, 1977; Weitzmann 1977), which had looked at late antiquity, *The Glory of Byzantium* (New York 1997; Evans and Wixom, 1997) was devoted to the Middle Byzantine period (843–1261). The second exhibition, *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (New York, 2004; Evans 2004), concentrated on the empire's final centuries (1261–1453, although the exhibition also looked at the empire's legacy in Europe down to 1557). Both exhibitions have come to be seen as landmarks in the study of Byzantine art, their catalogs as key surveys of the state of knowledge of the art of the empire across these two periods. These catalogs both opened with maps showing the geographical scope of the loans to the exhibitions and the cultural sway of the empire in the periods covered by each exhibition. These maps provide two different ways of conceptualizing the nature of art on the fringes of the Byzantine world, and its relationship to art produced at the heart of the empire.

The two maps bear the same title, *Byzantium and its neighbors*, and both cover approximately the same geographical area, stretching from Spain in the west to Russia in the north, from Iran in the east to Egypt in the south (but extending to Ethiopia in the earlier map). However, they were conceived very differently. That for the *Glory of Byzantium* emblazons "BYZANTIUM" across the center of the map, locating the empire over a swath of territory from the heel of Italy to eastern Anatolia, and surrounds it with a hierarchy of lesser demarcations of space: two areas are marked out in an intermediate-sized font: "Latin West" over western Europe, and "Islam" over the Middle East, and around these, other areas are labeled in a still smaller font: Scandinavia, Bulgaria, and Kievan Rus' to the north, Georgia and Armenia to the east; and Cyprus, Syria, and Egypt to the south. These various labels are difficult to classify. The two larger areas to east and west are blanket terms that are easy to understand, but very hard to define. Both "Latin West" and "Islam" cover a bewildering variety of changing dynasties, states, and fiefdoms, with many languages,

histories, rivalries, and traditions; they are united only by approximate ties of common heritage or religion. The inclusiveness and vagaries of the labels hint at distinct alternative cultural traditions that lie beyond the remit of an exhibition of Byzantine art. The other eight smaller labels are equally complex, lying somewhere between geographical, political, religious, and ethnic signifiers, but their size suggests a dependence on the empire around which they lie. If nothing else, the map demonstrates the difficulties inherent in trying to summarize any relationship between people and geographical space in the historic past.

Perhaps in reaction to the problems posed by the first map, that for the later exhibition, *Byzantium: Faith and Power,* omitted these labels completely; it placed no divisions or other labels between the cities noted on the map, from Granada, London, and Belozersk in the west and north to Ardabil, Shiraz, and Tripoli in the south and east, leaving the reader to estimate the true extent of the empire, and the relationship of these cities to it.

The reasons for these changes in cartographic practice are many. At least in part they were determined by the problems of showing the fluctuating frontiers of the empire on a single map, and the uneasy relationship between the modern idea of nation states and the medieval reality of fuzzy frontiers and dispersed populations. However, it is likely that modern political arguments between nation states about their historic size and relationship to the Byzantine empire also played a part: the label for Armenia in the first map, for example, is placed approximately over the territory of the modern state, although in medieval times its population was spread over a much wider area (compare Hewsen 2001, fig. 1). Moreover, any such map must make decisions about what labels to include or to exclude (why, some pointed out, was Serbia not marked on the earlier map, even though many of its monuments were pinpointed?).

As well as raising important questions about the nature of the Byzantine empire, the two maps also ask us to question what we understand Byzantine art to be. The earlier map, acknowledging the political diversity of the empire, implies a series of distinct ethnic or geographical blocks whose artistic interaction with the Byzantine state at their center could be analyzed (although the centering of the map on "Byzantium," and the employment of varying font sizes already implicitly suggests a hierarchical relationship). The latter map promotes the idea of a Byzantine *oikoumene* (Christian commonwealth) in which barriers are not significant, and implies that the common artistic trends that can be found across the region are more important than the political, ethnic, or other boundaries that divide.

Both maps ask us how we wish to define Byzantine art. Is Byzantine art coterminous with the frontiers of the empire (assuming we can work out where those are at any one time)? Is it art made by Byzantine artists, whether at home or abroad? Or does Byzantine art require a very different definition? Given that the majority of the art that survives is religious, should we define it in theological terms: art produced by those states that formed part of the theological communion of the Orthodox world (this then includes the states of the Balkans, Russia, and Georgia, but suggests a more awkward relationship with the non-Chalcedonian churches of Armenia, Syria, and Coptic Egypt)? Or is it vaguer still: a more embracing concept that includes all

art produced under the general cultural sway of the empire and its religious world view? Of course, as the definition becomes broader, we have to wonder what is left of the term "Byzantine art" that is in any sense meaningful. As we move away from the heartlands of the empire, and in particular away from Constantinople, and look towards the frontiers of the empire, these questions become more pressing: at what point does Byzantine art stop being "Byzantine" and become "Georgian" or "Russian" or "Coptic" instead? Does the use of a different script or language on images with a common iconography mark a clear enough division to exclude these works of art from Byzantium? Or do the various (and varying) common iconographic, stylistic, or functional features of the art produced in all of these regions at different periods tie them in to a common history with Byzantine art?

These questions are important for the ways in which we conceive artistic production in the Byzantine world. Each decision to include or exclude works of art from the canon of Byzantine art changes our overall conception of what Byzantine art is, and of how it can be studied and understood. In what follows I consider some of the consequences for the decisions about inclusion and exclusion that art historians have made on the ways in which Byzantine art has been studied. It is worth stating at the outset that I would argue that we should use as broad a definition of Byzantine art as possible, so as to include all the art produced around the edges of the empire (as well as those made across the widely spread and often divergent provinces within it), but I acknowledge that this has a cost in terms of the coherence of any one narrative of Byzantine art.

Byzantine Art, Nationalism, and Theology

Attempts to study Byzantine art in ways that do not rely on simple (and often simplistic) definitions that center on the geographic frontiers of the empire, or on the identification of Byzantine artists, seem to be more inherently sympathetic to the nature of the empire and its art. Studies that allow for the inclusion of Sicilian or Serbian art, or that of Kievan Rus' or the states of the Caucasus suggest the permeability of all the cultures that surrounded Byzantium. They underline the political, cultural, and spiritual weight that the empire bore throughout its lifetime, and the degree to which it established the artistic agenda that its neighbors followed, adapted, or, more rarely, avoided. It is clear, for example, that if the mosaics set up in the 1040s in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Kiev (Logvin 1971) are viewed alongside those produced at the same time within the empire, as at Nea Mone on Chios (Mouriki 1985), then the programmatic, iconographic, and stylistic debt of the Kievans to the Byzantines is very apparent. However, working on an assumption that all the neighbors of the empire shared essential artistic principles raises a different set of issues that need to be considered. These are most apparent in each neighbor's own tradition of art historical scholarship, which often seeks to emphasize the differences between Byzantine and locally produced art. Sometimes this is determined by a nationalistic agenda: attempts to use the art of the past to promote a distinct national present. Given that most of the Christian neighbors of the empire are in ex-communist or former Soviet states, the historic

legacy of their political situation in the twentieth century is evident. Both under communism and post-independence, there is a clear trend towards identifying difference, whether to replicate the political divide of the Iron Curtain before 1989, or to accentuate the historical roots of the fractures between the Orthodox peoples of the ex-Soviet world after the collapse of the USSR. Armenia, for example, lent to neither of the Metropolitan Museum exhibitions, although they have been very generous donors to foreign exhibitions devoted specifically (and solely) to Armenian art (London, 2001; Paris, 2007; see Nersessian 2001; Durand 2007). And Georgia, which lent to the *Glory of Byzantium*, did not lend to its successor in 2004. We can only speculate about the reasons for these decisions not to lend, as so many factors are involved, varying from museological concerns, including the condition of the objects and the wish lists presented by the exhibition curators, to broader cultural and political issues, such as the Russian attacks on Georgia in August 2008, which prevented loans travelling from Tbilisi to the Royal Academy exhibition *Byzantium 330–1453*, after the completion of the catalog (London, 2008; Cormack and Vassilaki 2008). Nevertheless, decisions not to lend do also fit in with more general political concerns and changes in both Caucasian countries, in which a desire to assert an independent artistic identity that is not dependent on a central Byzantine reference point is evident. In contrast, the generous loans from Serbia to the London exhibition in 2008 suggest a very different desire to be seen to be part of a major European artistic and cultural tradition after years of political isolation.

The absence of any art from Armenia in the two New York exhibitions may also have been influenced by theology. The Armenian Church never signed up to the canons of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon in 451, and so has not been in communion with the Greek and other Orthodox Churches for more than 1,500 years (although, of course, the Armenians regard their own church as "Orthodox"—see Finneran in this volume). If the Churches are theologically separate, then it becomes a legitimate question to ask whether the art should also be considered separately. This equally concerns the other non-Chalcedonian Churches of the eastern Mediterranean, notably the Syriacs and Copts. Most superficial formal comparisons of Byzantine and Armenian works of art, if placed side by side, suggest to the art historian that there are many common iconographic and other traits that the two Churches' art share, but it is equally possible to argue that the historic antagonism between the Churches, and their different interpretations of the meaning and function of art in worship mean that each can only be satisfactorily studied in isolation from the other. In some cases, it is clear that the theological divide did result in a clear artistic division as well. In the early tenth century, Armenian rulers were politically dominated by the Islamic caliphs in Baghdad rather than their Christian Byzantine neighbors to the west, and this affected the forms of art that were produced, most evident in the Islamic influences visible in the decoration of the church of Aghtamar on an island in Lake Van (now in Eastern Turkey), which was built for the Armenian king Gagik of Vaspurakan (915–21) (Jones 2007). But even at times of greater rapprochement, the Armenians maintained particular local artistic traditions, such as the erection of khatchkars (commemorative stones carved with crosses) that find no comparison in Byzantium (Azarian 1973).

Filling Gaps

To apply the most basic, reductionist interpretation to Byzantium itself, it would be possible to define Byzantine art as, simply, the art produced within the frontiers of the empire, an area that changed enormously over the millennium of the empire. However, this approach, while producing a clearly delimited and defined corpus, would have some important consequences for our understanding of Byzantine art. It would mean that for many periods we would have a considerably reduced array of objects and materials to study. Indeed, for reasons of historical survival it has long been clear that art historians have to look beyond the frontiers of Byzantium to tell the story of the empire and its art. It would now be unthinkable to exclude the mosaics of Sicily or Venice in accounts of the art of the twelfth century (Demus 1948; Demus 1984). Mosaic has long been considered the pre-eminent Byzantine artistic medium, and the monuments around Venice and Palermo constitute the largest, most expensive, and finest ensembles of figural mosaic anywhere in the Mediterranean. On those grounds, these churches appear in all the recent surveys of Byzantine art as a means of demonstrating the nature of monumental mosaic decoration in the twelfth century. If excluded, we would be limited to the mosaics of Daphni and a few other isolated panels and fragments for the history of this crucial century. The inclusion of the Italian mosaics, then, allows for a more continuous narrative of monumental art to be produced; but at what cost? One important danger is that the insertion of these monuments may distort our picture of Byzantine art. This was, after all, art produced outside the political frontiers of the empire, indeed by enemies and rivals of the empire, and so may represent a different direction of development of the art from that of the lost monuments of the empire. How, then, can this art be dealt with? Recent surveys of Byzantine art have produced different solutions. Robin Cormack in his *Byzantine Art* (Cormack 2000: 182) included the Italian monuments by suggesting that they can be seen as a Western "response" to Byzantine art; whereas John Lowden in his *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (Lowden 1997: 314) presented them as a "puzzling" adaption of the art of Constantinople. In each case, however, there is an implicit idea that it is possible to see beyond the Venetian or Sicilian mosaics in order to recreate or re-imagine the now lost Byzantine original works of art to which they are seen to respond or adapt. Their inclusion is as intermediaries that allow access to the prototypes (an interesting analogy to the way in which Byzantine icons themselves are seen to function to give access to the original through copies). Such ideas raise many methodological problems about how the "distorting mirror" of the intermediary can be overcome: can we ever be sure that the postulated picture of Byzantine art that emerges from these lavish Italian reflections is a true one?

A similar situation occurs in histories of the thirteenth century, which turn from Italy to Serbia to provide a narrative for the development of monumental art. Now, in the continuing absence of large-scale works from Constantinople, art historical surveys turn to the churches of the newly created Serbian monarchy, such as Studenica (1208), Žiča (1230s) and Sopoćani (1260s) (Djurić 1967). The thriving

Serbian state and the churches its rulers built were only possible because of the collapse of Byzantine political control after the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and these churches are often presented as the "missing link" between the late Komnenian period and the birth of Palaiologan art at the end of the thirteenth century. Art historians have made a compelling case for tracing the stylistic thread that links the twelfth century to the fourteenth through Serbia; but it is only achieved by viewing the monuments selectively. The architecture of the buildings that contain these paintings owes much more to Romanesque building in Italy than to Byzantium, but this is less often noted. The inclusion of the Serbian churches depends on a divorce between the differing elements that make up the churches as a whole. The relationship to Byzantium is a necessarily selective one.

In all these cases, the "Byzantine" element that has been highlighted is one of style. It centers entirely on the formal appearance of the works of art, the nuances of dress, pose, and gesture, the development of drapery folds, the representations of space, and the continuation of particular iconographic models. In contrast, elements that concern the overall programs of the paintings and the ways in which they fit in to the architecture of the buildings, their iconographic peculiarities, and the functions of art within the buildings, are given less emphasis. In particular, the political uses made of Byzantine art by these different foreign rulers must be minimized. The justification for this approach is that in all these cases it has been argued that the monuments were created by Byzantine artists. Nevertheless, through this categorization of the monuments, historians have chosen to prioritize a particular version of art history, which concentrates on the origins of the iconographies, styles, or artists involved. It is an art history that is more concerned with creation than reception.

It was this approach to art history with its interest in the origins of artists that allowed Otto Demus to proclaim that Monreale, the great cathedral built on the hills above Palermo by William II between 1174 and 1182 is "not so much a Sicilian as a Byzantine monument." (Demus 1948: xix). Thus, the presence of what he concluded to be Greek artists took precedence over the location of the art in a Latin-rite Benedictine abbey-cum-cathedral in a Norman Romanesque basilica, and over its patronage—it was paid for by William II in the same years that he launched waves of attacks on Byzantine coastal territories and set his eyes on the conquest of Constantinople itself. It was also more important than its function: the clergy who worshipped in the cathedral did not share the Orthodox interpretation of the efficacy of images of their Byzantine counterparts. The discussion of all the Italian and Serbian churches mentioned above shares the same distinction between creation on the one hand and function and meaning on the other.

The disjunction exactly parallels a division in the study of art produced within the empire itself. In the 1960s, a series of articles and books (notably Beckwith 1961; Demus 1964) promoted a definition of Byzantine art as "the art of Constantinople." These have had a continuing impact on the study of Byzantine art, in which art produced outside the capital is frequently dismissed as provincial or archaizing, both implicit critiques measured against a metropolitan art seen as progressive (see also Holmes in this volume). This has been most evident in the study of the church known as Tokalı Kilise in Cappadocia, a Byzantine province in central Anatolia, some 500 km

east of Constantinople. This rock-cut church was excavated and painted at the start of the tenth century, but then massively extended and given new paintings in the 930s. The style of the paintings in the two parts of the church is radically different: that in the old church is strongly linear, with bold outlines to the figures, a style used in many other churches in the region; whereas that in the new church employs much more subtle modeling, and its figures, although very tall, are more naturalistically rendered. This style finds its closest comparison in work carried out by highly accomplished manuscript painters, working for senior court officials in the imperial capital. There is a clear disparity between the two parts of the church, and that in the new church has been hailed as rare evidence of "metropolitan" monumental art of the tenth century (Epstein 1986). Such an epithet for the paintings necessarily downplays the iconographic content of the new church's decorative program which remains rooted in local Cappadocian traditions. The emphasis of art historians has firmly been on the stylistic rather than iconographic or other aspects.

It is evident that the historical weight of art historical discourse on Byzantine art has been primarily concerned with the creation of works of art, and with their formal appearance. This derives from an interest in artists, the predominant concern of "mainstream" Western art history from Vasari onwards. This might appear an odd priority in the Byzantine world since we know so little about artists. Very few are named in sources, fewer have left their names on what they created, and none have careers that can be traced (although for a recent attempt to create such a biography, see Cormack 2007: 69–81). Where attempts have been made to identify artists on the basis of stylistic analysis, there have been many disagreements: this is particularly the case for objects made on the edges of the empire, where different communities have co-existed. It has been most apparent in the Crusader kingdoms of the thirteenth century. One icon in the collection of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in Egypt, showing St Sergios and Bakchos, has been variously ascribed by different scholars in the fifty years since it was first published to the Knights Templar (Weitzmann 1966), an Apulian artist working in the Levant (Weitzmann 1984: 148–9), a Cypriot artist (Mouriki 1985–6: 69), a Syrian artist working on Cyprus (Mouriki 1990: 119), a Cilician Armenian artist working for Antioch (Piatnitsky et al. 2000: 252–4), or a Crusader artist working in Acre (New York 2004: 374–5). Art historians have tended to seek the "origins" of the artist as a means of understanding the work of art, rather than consider how these icons could have functioned for the different communities that may have seen them.

Art historians have also substituted patrons for artists, and used them to discover the intentions and meanings of works of art. Thus, for Monreale, art historians have looked to William II to discern the political and dynastic meaning of the cathedral, and to his Cluniac Benedictine monks to understand the theological messages and arrangement of images throughout the building (Dittelbach 2003; Borsook 1990: 51–79). This further problematizes the inclusion of art beyond Byzantium's political frontiers within the canon of Byzantine art, since it places the meaning of the art ever further away from the artists, and ever closer to rulers, aristocrats, and clergymen who did not regard themselves as "Byzantines" or "Romans," even if they sought to usurp Byzantium's political authority.

This raises questions about the whole process of the creation of Byzantine art: how much weight should be placed on patrons, and how much on the artists who actually executed the works? If more emphasis is given to those who commissioned, rather than created, works of art, then the argument in favor of including these monuments as part of the history of Byzantine art must be weakened: the (Byzantine) artists merely execute their (non-Byzantine) masters' commands. Of course, the interaction between patrons and artists is usually more complex than this: artists interpret the commissions they are given and seek to express them through the artistic forms that they have been trained to use. Moreover, if patrons abroad did seek out Byzantine artists and craftsmen, the reasons for that choice must also be taken into consideration.

Portable Art

So far, this discussion has concentrated on monumental art, art in a fixed location. However, a second problem with defining the limits of Byzantine art occurs when we turn to smaller-scale, portable objects. There are a number of groups of small-scale objects for which we have little information about provenance, production, or use. Whole classes of objects can, as a result, be moved in or out of the category of Byzantine art, depending on how art historians choose to classify them. One key case here concerns Middle Byzantine ivories. Of the two hundred or so surviving medieval Byzantine ivories made in the tenth and eleventh centuries and cataloged by Adolf Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934), about 30 have long been seen as problematic. Although they broadly follow the model of ivories known to have been made in Constantinople, concerns about their style, technique, iconography, and quality have raised doubts about whether they should really be counted as Byzantine works of art at all. This dubious status has been given a geographical expression: it has been argued that they must have been made on the fringes of the empire, with southern Italy proposed as the most likely site; hence they are known as Italo-Byzantine ivories (Keck 1930). Standing outside the mainstream of Byzantium, they are often excluded from studies of Byzantine ivories (Cutler 1994).

The exclusion of these probably Italian ivories runs counter to the inclusion of the Italian monumental mosaics we have already encountered, even though both were made in a similar cultural ambit. Just as the mosaics were included because of their exceptional quality, so the ivories are excluded because of their perceived inadequacies. This has served Byzantine art history in a number of ways: it has promoted a vision of Byzantine ivories as a more homogeneous group (suggesting a simpler narrative for the development of the craft, with workers and patrons all sharing common aesthetic and functional goals), but also as a uniformly high-quality craft. Byzantium emerges as the center for good art, with poorer products consigned to the periphery. Low-quality art has here been physically removed from the heartlands of the empire. To reintegrate such ivories back into the mainstream of consideration would require

a reformulation of our expectations of what Byzantine art is: more diverse and more heterogeneous.

A similar argument has been constructed around the production of Byzantine enamels, with variations in quality being explained in geographical terms. Low-quality enamels are explained either as being made in the provenances of the empire (or in foreign centers such as Georgia), or as being made in Constantinople but destined to be given as diplomatic gifts to unimportant neighbors of the empire (Redford 1990; Wessel 1969: 115–16). Gradations of quality have led to a bewildering variety of distinctions: the twelfth-century Ezstergom reliquary, which surrounds its fragment of the True Cross with enamel scenes from the Passion, has been portrayed as showing an "advanced provinciality of style" (Beckwith 1961: 111).

Recent discussion has sought to move away from the question of provenance to consider art with shared meanings across the Mediterranean (Hoffman 2001) or art produced in multiple locations (Redford 2004). These discussions have sought decisively to move debate on to questions of reception and away from creation.

Conclusion

So far, this essay has tended to concentrate on all the reasons why, perhaps, we should produce a narrow definition of Byzantine art. It has noted the need to consider the local circumstances behind the production of every work of art—that it is more effective to judge Sicilian art in terms of its place in Sicilian society than to see it is a reflection of Byzantine art. Equally, it has noted that attempts to identify the origins of artists, and to use artists as a means to define art, can be a complex and not necessarily helpful way of viewing the works of art produced in the eastern Mediterranean. Despite this, however, I would argue that it is essential that as broad a definition of Byzantine art as possible is employed by art historians, one that includes the empire's non-Chalcedonian and Latin neighbors, and that seeks to integrate art of lower quality, or of provincial origin. Admittedly such a policy works against the production of a single narrative history of Byzantine art, but it allows a much more dynamic vision of the working of art to be produced.

A broader approach allows us to see how central core ideas about the nature and value of art in Orthodox societies could be developed and change in different parts of that wider Orthodox world. This then allows as much emphasis on what 20 years ago would be dismissed as "archaic" or derivative art as on the modern and progressive. Bringing all the outside art in also allows for the art at the center to be better understood; to understand the core values of art in Byzantium, the saints, and media it chose to support, as well as those which it neglected. It is less homogeneous and more dynamic, versatile, and complex.

A wider approach also brings to the fore some of the strengths of Byzantine art. This is most apparent in the fourteenth century, when the different regions of the eastern Mediterranean were more politically divided than ever before. Yet at exactly the same time, they were more closely tied artistically than ever before. The

volumetric, angular Palaiologan style that emerged in Constantinople and the Balkans in the late thirteenth century spread over the following century so that it can be found everywhere from Genoa in the west (Nelson 1985) to monasteries in Georgia in the east (Amiranashvili 1980). In no two places is it exactly the same, but its widespread dissemination speaks to the enormous spiritual power of Byzantine art forms and reveals the real power of the Byzantine *oecumene*. The danger remains in such a globalizing approach of homogenizing all the art and underplaying regional differences. It also smacks of an imperialist, colonialist view of art, in which the outlying regions copy the center, suggesting a one-way route of artistic transmission. Nevertheless, there is much to be gained from considering the flexibility and adaptability of Byzantine art: an attempt to provide visual access to the divine that could be exploited and appreciated by such a diverse range of cultures, political societies and variations of Christian beliefs.

FURTHER READING

It is the recent exhibitions in New York and London that have most effectively sought to explore the relationships betweem the art of Byzantium and that of its neighbors: *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, AD 843–1261*, eds. H. C. Evans, and W. D. Wixom (New York, 1997); *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. H. C. Evans (New York, 2004); *Byzantium*, eds. R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki (London, 2008). For narrative histories of Byzantine art that exploit the art of the empire's neighbors in different ways, compare the treatments in Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 2000), John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London, 1997) and Thomas F. Mathews, *The Art of Byzantium: between Antiquity and the Renaissance* (London, 1998).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Icons and Iconomachy

Leslie Brubaker

More than the word "Byzantine" itself, "iconoclasm" and the related "iconoclast" are widely encountered in modern English usage: even beer mats celebrate the "iconoclast" antics of the free-thinkers who patronize a well-known brand of lager. More's the pity, then, that the Byzantines themselves rarely used the words: "iconoclast" is occasionally found as a pejorative from the early eighth century onwards, but "iconoclasm," which is a Greek compound meaning "image (icon) breaking (clasm)," is a sixteenth-century invention that has only become firmly attached to the Byzantine image debates since the 1950s (Bremmer 2008: 13–14). What modern scholars call the period of Iconoclasm, the years between c.720 and 843 when the role of religious imagery was debated by members of the Orthodox Church, the Byzantines referred to as iconomachy—the image struggle. As we shall see, their terminology is far more accurate than ours.

The beginnings of Iconomachy

The image debate apparently began in the 720s. We first hear about in three letters of the patriarch Germanos (715–30) concerning two churchmen, Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis. The letters date to the 720s and, perhaps, the early 730s after Germanos had retired (Ostrogorsky 1930: 238; Speck 1981: 267–81).

In the earliest two letters (Mansi xiii, 100A11–105A3, 105B7–E11; *PG* 98: 156B12–161C5, 161D6–164C10; Stein 1980: 5–30), both concerning the bishop of Nakoleia (a city in Phrygia, roughly 300 km southeast of Constantinople), Germanos expressed his annoyance at Constantine's unexpected behavior. The first letter, addressed to Constantine's superior John, bishop of Synada, treated the issue primarily as a disciplinary case. According to Germanos, Constantine had refused to honor images by performing *proskynesis*, a gesture of suppliance or reverence, in front of them. Constantine apparently reasoned that such honor was due only to God, and

Germanos had, he thought, convinced Constantine that the honor shown to sacred portraits and that shown to God was different in kind. Germanos wrote to John that Constantine had agreed to uphold tradition, and to do nothing which might give rise to a scandal or cause confusion among the populace. This had been written down in a letter which Constantine was to convey to John of Synada. Constantine had, however, failed to give the missive to John, and had retreated to his earlier, anti-image position; John had written to Germanos about this, and Germanos now asked John to resolve the problem quietly and unobtrusively. In the second letter, addressed directly to Constantine, Germanos chastised him for acting behind his back and against his authority. The letters to or relating to Constantine of Nakoleia demonstrate that at least one churchman was worried about the authority of sacred portraits in the 720s, but there is no evidence that this was a widespread concern.

The latest of the three letters (Mansi xiii, 108A7–128A12; *PG* 98, 164D3–188B12; Stein 1980: 30–82), to Thomas of Klaudioupolis (a see under the jurisdiction of Constantinople), is different in tone. Thomas had stayed with Germanos, and the latter recalled their conversations, none of which prepared him to learn that, on his return to Klaudioupolis, Thomas had removed icons from his church as if this were accepted practice. Germanos condemned this novelty, which gave Jews and Muslims the opportunity to slander the Church. He explained at length why Thomas's actions were wrong, citing tradition, scripture, and the positive benefits of images to inspire the emulation of the saints, a trope familiar from the fourth-century theologian, Basil of Caesarea, onwards. Germanos distinguished between idolatry and icon veneration, and provided a theological justification for sacred portraits, noting that the honor accorded to holy images was directed not to the material of which the images were made, but to the person represented. In conclusion, Germanos demanded that Thomas avoid arousing anger and confusion in the Christian community, and reminded him that "the Christ-loving and most pious emperors" (Leo III and his son Constantine V) had erected an image in front of the palace, portraying the apostles, prophets, and the cross, as a demonstration of imperial faith. The letter to Thomas seems to indicate that by (probably) shortly after 730, the anti-image arguments were no longer simply a localized concern but had become more widespread. It does not, however, implicate the emperors; indeed, Germanos framed Thomas's action as going against both the practices of the church and the practices of the state. In fact, as we shall see, the earliest evidence of imperial involvement in the image struggle does not appear until the 750s.

The epistolary evidence suggests that Byzantine issues with religious imagery began in the church, in the second decade of the eighth century. Icons are attested from the second century, and Christian imagery was relatively widespread by the fourth. So why did sacred portraits become contested objects only in the early eighth century?

The Background: the Changing Role of the Sacred Portrait

The earliest written accounts of Christian sacred portraits condemn them as "pagan." The second-century writer Irenaeus and the third-century (?) author of the *Acts of*

John both describe the celebration of holy portraits (Mathews 1999: 177–8), and in both cases the venerators are condemned. Irenaeus's *Against heresies* described a woman hanging wreaths on a portrait of Christ, a practice that Irenaeus cited as proof that the woman was a heretic; in the *Acts*, a man hangs garlands on and lights candles before an image of John the evangelist, prompting John to exclaim, "Why, I see you are still living as a pagan!" (Hennecke and Schneemelcher 2, 1963: 220). Despite this, there is ample documentary evidence of religious narrative scenes and, more rarely, isolated portraits, from the fourth century (there is a good collection of relevant texts in translation in Mango 1972: 34–41), though the "pagan" accoutrements of garlands and candles appear to have been avoided during the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. Perhaps responding to fears of "acting pagan," the preserved texts from this period give no indication that sacred portraits were venerated in any special way; instead, the literary sources spoke of images intended to preserve the memory of the person represented, to provide an inspiring model for imitation, or simply to honor the figure portrayed (Brubaker 1998).

But across the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, attitudes toward sacred portraits gradually changed. By the second half of the sixth century, a small group of miraculously produced portraits of Christ were recorded in Syria and Egypt: a text dated to 569 described the linen portrait found a generation earlier in a well at Kamoulianai, probably the same portrait that was later credited with saving Constantinople from the Avar siege in 626 (Zacharias of Mitylene, *Chronicle* 320–22; Belting 1994: 498–9); and Evagrios Pontikos, writing in the 590s, ascribed the salvation of Edessa from the Persians to a linen portrait of Christ believed to have been created when Christ pressed his face against the cloth (A. M. Cameron 1983: 84–5). These were said to have been miraculously produced, without human intervention, and they were recognized as miracle workers themselves: both acted as urban protectors (*palladia*), and saved cities from enemy attack.

"Normal" icons did not, however, yet have any such power attributed to them, at least not in any systematic way. The textual evidence on which we must rely to assess the changing role of sacred images is, unfortunately, problematic. Texts about icons were heavily reworked during and after the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 787, and accounts about miracles were often "updated" by later editors to include the intervention of images, either to reinforce the Orthodox position on images or, more usually, simply because, once what we might call the "theology of icons" had been established, it became almost inconceivable to Orthodox Byzantines that God would work without his earthly agents, relics, and sacred portraits (Speck 1991: 246–7; Brubaker 1998: 1221–2). If we restrict ourselves to texts that are, for one reason or another, generally, though not universally, believed to remain more or less as they were written, we can none the less see the status of icons changing perceptibly toward the end of the seventh century: they are invoked repeatedly in the writings of Anastasios of Sinai, notably the *Guidebook* (*Hodegos*) of the 680s (Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 254); they enter anti-heretic polemic for the first time in the writings of Stephen of Bostra (c.690), who also mentioned honoring images with candles, curtains, and incense, accoutrements previously associated with important relics (Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 268–9); and the first ecumenical church legislation concerning images appeared in the *Acts* of the Quinisext council, also known as

the Council in Trullo (691–2) (Trullo; Brubaker 2006). Whether or not sacred portraits were sometimes and sporadically venerated before this, by the end of the seventh century icons had taken a much more significant and ubiquitous role in the Byzantine textual record than they had played previously.

How this worked in practice is suggested by a contemporary Western pilgrimage account. Arculf went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 683–4, and Adamnán recorded his account of the journey sometime before 688, including a tale Arculf said he had heard from storytellers in Constantinople. A man about to set off on a great military expedition stood before a portrait of the confessor George, and "began to speak to the portrait as if it were George present in person"; he asked "to be delivered from all dangers by war." Adamnán then tells us that "It was a war full of danger, and there were many thousands of men who perished miserably. But he … was preserved from all misadventure by his commendation to the Christ-loving George, and by the grace of God came safely back … and spoke to St George as though he were present in person" again (*On the Holy Places*: 231–2; Wilkinson 1977: 114–15). This is a story, related by storytellers, retold by Arculf, and written down by Adamnán—a tale within a tale—and in such a narrative chain the "truth" of the unnamed man's existence or the "reality" of the icon cannot be the point. Adamnán noted only one other icon in his account (*On the Holy Places*: 233; Wilkinson 1977: 115): his is not an itinerary stuffed full of miraculous images; so we are probably safe in assuming that the story of the man and the icon was circulating in Constantinople in the 680s, and was striking enough for Arculf to remember it and repeat it to Adamnán. In the tale, the portrait is treated like relics had been since the fourth century, as a site of the saint's presence: George's image can be spoken to "as though he were present in person." It is significant that this first fully-fleshed-out account of an icon standing in for the figure portrayed is linked with a soldier setting off to a war that we are presumably meant to understand as being against either the Arabs or (less likely, given Adamnán's preoccupations) the Bulgars: the oldest clear indication of the absorption of "normal" icons into the cult of relics is firmly located in the context of the Islamic conquests and the wars of the later seventh century.

Why was 680 the Tipping Point?

While the late seventh century was a relatively peaceful period, it was precisely then, perhaps because there was time to think and to write, that Eastern Christians began to record a heightened sense of anxiety, including a belief that "the end of the world has arrived" (John of Phenek, c.686; Brock 1982: 15–17; Brock 1989; Hoyland 1997). The realization that Islam was not going to disappear, and that the former Byzantine territories of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine were not going to be recovered, unleashed a spate of apocalyptic texts, mostly written in the lands now under Arab control (for example, the *Apocalypse* of pseudo-Methodios, written in Syriac, some time in the early 690s: *Apoc. Ps-Meth*). From these works it is clear that, in the former Byzantine territories, the critical destabilizing factors were eschatological,

driven by fear of apostasy, and financial insecurity (Brock 1982: 19; Reinink 1992: esp. 178, 181).

The *Acts* of the Quinisext council of 692 also reveal anxiety about the fate of Christianity and Christians, but the Byzantine churchmen expressed this in terms of regulation and purification rather than eschatology. As is well known, the *Acts* provide the first Byzantine canonical legislation about religious images, and the three canons directed at artisanal production appear to have been an attempt to regulate and control the new powers of sacred portraiture that had emerged around a decade earlier (Brubaker 2006). Canon 73 forbade decorating the floor with signs of the cross; Canon 82 dictated that Christ should be represented in human form rather than symbolically as a lamb; and Canon 100 insisted on the distinction between good and bad pictures, and concentrated on defining the latter as images that evoked "the flames of shameful pleasures" (Trullo: 155, 162–4, 180–81). What is new here is, first, the insistence that historical representation triumphs over symbolic metaphor; and, second, the insertion of images into standard arguments about the virtues of purity and truth over defilement and corruption. Both of these issues became bones of contention during the debates about images in the eighth and ninth centuries; and both focused on the need for exactitude and certainty, generated by anxiety and insecurity, in the production of Christian imagery, so recently elevated as a site of real presence.

The uncertainty that underlay the Quinisext churchmen's efforts to standardize and cleanse Orthodox practice was continued in Anastasios of Sinai's *Questions and Answers*, probably composed at the very end of the seventh century (Haldon 1992; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 254), where Anastasios wrote that the "present generation" was enduring a period of spiritual crisis (Haldon 1992: 132). Both the *Acts* and Anastasios find many parallels: across the late seventh century, a desire for internal purity was a leitmotif of church and state rhetoric (Haldon 1992: esp. 144–5; Haldon 1997). This concern lasted well into the following century, when the iconoclasts were so concerned to avoid the pollution of the sacred by the profane that they removed relics from altars, a practice which led their opponents to castigate them for "despising" relics, but which was in fact meant to avoid any possibility of mundane saints defiling the sanctity of the Trinity (Auzépy 2001: 23–4).

The state, the church, and the individual Orthodox believer, all in a state of spiritual crisis, needed reassurance, and this took two forms. First, new channels of access to divinity appeared. The real presence of saints offered by miracle-working relics and images not made by human hands was expanded to portraits painted by living people (and, eventually, justified by new ways of thinking about the relationship between the painter and the painted: Barber 2002). Second, new rules and new rituals of purification were devised to control and regulate holy power, and to ensure that God would look upon the "chosen people," the Orthodox, with favor once again.

In short, icons took on new significance at the end of the seventh century because they addressed the spiritual crisis and insecurities brought about by the Islamic conquests. The ramifications were almost immediate. Changes in practice by around the year 680 were countered by the institution of canonical legislation regulating the proper use of Christian imagery at the Quinisext countil of 691–2. Conversely,

the following generation of churchmen, active in the 720s, included Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis who, as we have seen, represent the backlash against the new role of icons and provide our earliest documented iconoclasts.

From Church to State Affair: Leo III and Constantine V

It used to be assumed that the emperor Leo III (717–41) was a fervent iconoclast, responsible for unleashing the anti-icon movement by removing an icon of Christ from above the main ceremonial entrance to the palace, the Chalke gate, in either 726 or 730 (see e.g. Vasiliev 1952: 258). This assumption rests on three documents, all of which are, on this issue, problematic. The arguments about when they were written and what they mean are complicated, and I will present only a simplified version here (for a detailed account, see Brubaker and Haldon 2010).

The first document is the *Liber pontificalis*, the *Book of the Popes*, which records papal events that occurred across the eighth and ninth centuries (*LP*). Though written very much from the papal point of view, Byzantine affairs are sometimes recorded, particularly when the pope was in conflict with the emperor. During Leo III's reign, the entries for both Gregory II (pope 715–31) and Gregory III (pope 731–41) refer to Leo at various points, mostly with regard to fiscal arguments and skirmishes over land ownership. Leo's actions against icons are mentioned in passing three times (*LP* I: 403–4, 415–16, 476–7), but in all cases have been identified as later insertions intended to enhance the anti-iconoclast credentials of the popes retrospectively (Gouillard 1968: 277–97, 299–305; Schreiner 1988: 370–71; Speck 1990: 637–95). So far as we can tell from other sources, papal relations with Byzantium remained reasonably cordial until the 750s.

The second and third texts concerning Leo and image destruction are the *Life* of Stephen the Younger and the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, both anti-iconoclast documents written 80 years after the events they purport to describe, and deeply concerned to vilify the emperor of their authors' youths, Constantine V (741–75), son of Leo III. Leo, inevitably, is presented in a very bad light indeed; and it is in these two texts that we find the earliest versions of the famous story of Leo's orders to remove an icon of Christ from the palace gate.

The *Life* of St Stephen the Younger, written in 807 or 809, tells us that the emperor Leo sent an officer to remove the Chalke portrait; he was knocked from his ladder to the ground and killed by a group of honorable women, "moved by zeal," who then advanced to the patriarchate and, blaming the patriarch Anastasios for the incident, stoned him. Anastasios fled to the emperor and persuaded Leo to put the "holy women" to death, after which "they rejoice with all of the other holy victorious athletes [martyrs] in heaven" (Stephen the Younger, *Life*: Auzépy 1997: 100–1; trans: 193–4). Many details of this saga are hard to believe, but "the truth" is surely not the point here: this is a moral tale and a classic example of inversion rhetoric which portrayed the weak (women) as victorious over the strong—the state official and the patriarch, the women's supposed physical and spiritual protectors, both physically, when the women killed the official, and morally, when the women wrong-footed the

patriarch and achieved martyrdom. A different rhetorical take on the story appeared a year or so later (between 810 and 814) in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor, where "the populace of the imperial city … killed a few of the emperor's men who had taken down the Lord's image that was above the great bronze [*chalke*] gate, with the result that many of them were punished in the cause of the true faith by mutilation, lashes, banishment, and fines, especially those who were prominent by birth and culture" (Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 6092).

The similarity between these two accounts is clear (Stein 1980: 153–7), but so too is a significant difference: rather than the women of the *Life* of St Stephen, Theophanes, an aristocratic monk, cast the powerful—men like himself—in the role of the pro-image heroes. We are not dealing with straightforward reporting, but with constructions of opposition, designed to make the same point to diverse audiences by casting different groups in the role of innocent victims. The extent to which either of these versions is grounded in actual events is impossible to say, but there are certainly no accounts written during Leo's own lifetime that support the stories told by Theophanes or the author of Stephen's *Life* shortly after the year 800. (Had there been, and had they been written from an imperial point of view, we would doubtless have been told that a crowd of unruly hooligans attacked a virtuous civil servant and were justly punished by the God-fearing emperor. But no such text survives.)

We are left, then, with no clear indication of Leo III's actions, save that c.730 Germanos held him up as a friend of images; that in the 720s and 730s he *may* have written something about images to the popes Gregory II and Gregory III within the context of an ongoing fiscal and territorial dispute; and that in the early ninth century he was the villain of a legend about the beginning of the image struggle. On this basis, we can hardly reconstruct the early years of iconomachy as an imperial movement. This was, however, to change under Leo III's son, Constantine V.

Constantine V (741–75) was initially challenged for the throne by Leo III's son-in-law Artabasdos, but cemented his position in Constantinople by 743. Soon thereafter, beginning in 746–7 and continuing until 749–50, the plague swept across the empire and decimated the population of Constantinople (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6238; Nikeph., 140; Rochow 1991: 160–64). In the aftermath of the plague and of an earthquake that damaged the capital in 740, Constantine initiated major repairs to the urban infrastructure of Constantinople (Ousterhout 2001: 17–19), and countered the population decline brought about by the plague by the relocation of people from the Aegean islands, Hellas, and the Peloponnese (Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 6247; Nikephoros, *Short History* 140; Rochow 1991: 173).

But the 740s were clearly traumatic, and, perhaps as a result, Constantine V seems to have thought long and carefully about his own theological position. He evidently decided that the iconoclasts had a point, and about 750 he delivered his Questions (*Peuseis*), perhaps to a group of churchmen (Gero 1977: 37–52). The text survives only in fragments, quoted to refute them by the later patriarch of Constantinople, Nikephoros (806–15; Nikephoros, *Antirrh.* in Mondzain-Baudinet: 297–302), but the main lines of Constantine's beliefs are clear. In the first Question, Constantine argued that Christ's two natures, human and divine, could not be separated, but that only the human Christ could be represented: portraits of Christ thus heretically

divided his two natures. The second *Peusis* maintained that the Eucharist, not paintings, presented the real image of Christ, because, when consecrated, the bread and wine represented the body and blood of Christ (Gero 1975). According to several sources, among them the *Warning of an Old Man Concerning the Holy Icons* (*Nouthesia gerontos peri tôn agiôn eikonôn* (Gero 1977: 25–36; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 251–2; Speck 1990: 565–77) and Theophanes (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6244), Constantine arranged meetings to persuade others of his point of view.

The Iconoclast Synod of 754

Constantine V thus appears as an iconoclast in the late 740s or early 750s, and a church synod made this policy official in 754. The Acts of the 754 Council do not survive, but the main points made were presumably summed up in its *Horos*, or "definition," which can be reconstructed from the writings of those who later condemned it (Mansi xiii, 205–365; Gero 1977: 68–94; Sahas 1986). The council was held in the imperial palace at Hiereia (Janin 1964: 148–50 and 498–9), and was attended by 338 bishops, mostly from the Constantinopolitan patriarchate but also from the provinces of Rome, Dalmatia, Hellas, and Sicily (Mansi xiii, 232D–E; Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6245). As the patriarch Anastasios died shortly before the council met, and a new patriarch was not elected until the final session in August, the meeting was presided over by the metropolitan of Ephesos, Theodosios, who, it appears, was strongly influenced by Constantine V (Herrin 1987: 368–70).

As outlined in the *Horos*, the main points made by the council were that:

- Christ could not be represented in images, since this would separate his human from his divine nature;
- the Eucharist was the true image of the divine dispensation which is Christ;
- images of the Virgin and saints represented an insult to their memory, for they lived eternally beside God;
- it was forbidden to tamper with or rework liturgical vessels, altar cloths, or hangings bearing images, without special permission from the patriarch and the emperor, lest the devil employ this as an excuse by which to abase the Church.

In sum, the *Horos* rejected the devotion shown to images, along with their display in churches and in private houses, and threatened those who disobeyed these injunctions with punishment. But it by no means rejected the honoring of the Virgin, the saints, and their relics, as was later claimed, and indeed it emphasized the honor due to the Virgin.

The council gave shape to a theology which had as its main beliefs:

- the centrality of the Trinity, including the Holy Spirit—which transmitted holiness to the bread of the Eucharist, thus making the Eucharist a true image of Christ;
- the importance of the Cross as the symbol of the crucifixion and of the God-protected and victorious emperors;

- the rejection of sources of spiritual authority vested outside the church, especially the altar, and thus a rejection of the spiritual worth of images;
- that the clergy were the only authoritative intermediaries between the sacred and humanity;
- the importance of the spoken or chanted word;
- that the intercessory power of saints was reached through prayer, rather than through relics or imagery (Auzépy 2001).

Images were thereby disassociated from spiritual authority, which was instead to be found in official media—the churches and the clergy. By implication, monks, holy men, and "unofficial" claimants to spiritual authority were circumscribed and confined to specific activities—prayer and charity (Brown 1973)—and images were repudiated.

Throughout all of the *Horos*, the authors presented themselves as the true inheritors of the apostolic tradition, and took pains to emphasize the unbroken and continuous tradition which existed between the views they expressed and the teachings of Christ, the Apostles, and the Fathers of the Church, in contrast to the false and innovative doctrine of their opponents. On this latter point, the new role of images as channels to the real presence of saints, they were, as we have seen, correct.

The Consequences of the 754 Council

Had the emperor inaugurated a serious, concentrated assault on images, it would surely have been not long after the synod of 754, yet there is very little concrete evidence for any actual destruction. As we have seen, the *Horos* specifically forbade acts of vandalism against ecclesiastical furnishings. Furthermore, the claims of the pro-image faction that their enemies set about destroying images rests on a very few events, often some considerable time after the synod of 754, and often of dubious authenticity. The only extant example of deliberate iconoclast activity in the capital appears in the *sekreton* (council hall) that linked the patriarchal palace with Hagia Sophia. Here crosses replaced figures once identified by inscriptions; these were picked out, but their location is evident from the disruption of the tesserae. The alteration has been associated with renovations commissioned by the iconoclast patriarch Niketas (766–80) sometime between 766 and 769 (Underwood 1955–6: 292–3; Cormack and Hawkins 1977: 204–5, 210–11, figs 14, 20, 21; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 20–21). This was a good twelve to fifteen years after the *Horos* of 754 that rejected images, and the substitution seems only to have been undertaken when other renovations were being made. Whatever Constantine's feelings, the scanty evidence that we have suggests that he implemented his policies for the most part only when a naturally arising opportunity made it possible (Gero 1977: 111–17; Ševčenko 1977; Huxley 1980; Auzépy 1992; Thümmel 2005: 50–52).

The only other preserved example of what appears to have been iconoclast activity—the replacement of a mosaic portrait of the Virgin and Child with a cross—appeared in the now-destroyed monastic church of the Koimesis at Nicaea (Underwood

1959; Barber 1991; Barber 2002; Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 21–3). Exactly when this substitution was made is not clear, but it is probably safe to assume that it was during the reign of either Constantine V or the only other "active" iconoclast emperor, Theophilos (829–42).

As the only eighth-century emperor publicly and vigorously to support an anti-image religious policy, Constantine became the focus of attack after this policy was overturned in 787, and again after the final restoration of images in 843. Though even his later Byzantine detractors admitted his qualities as a strong military leader and as the reconstructor of the urban fabric of Constantinople (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6258), they created a damning portrait of activities associated with his religious policies, such as his purported persecution of monks and destruction of church decorations and furnishings (Stephen the Younger *Life*, Auzépy 1997; 121, 166; tr. 215, 265). Most of this cannot be substantiated. Contemporary texts are silent, and there was no protest from Rome: the entry for Pope Stephen II (752–7) in the *Book of the Popes* did not mention the 754 council, or refer to the icon issue at all. Constantine V appears to have fallen victim to an extremely successful later smear campaign, and the negative image promoted by later Byzantine authors was accepted uncritically by most modern scholars until relatively recently.

After Constantine V

Constantine V died in 775 and was succeeded by his son, Leo IV (750–80), who had been crowned co-emperor shortly after his birth, in 751. Following the precedent established by his father, and reiterated on the coinage, which under Constantine V had initiated the practice of portraying the preceding emperors of the family on the reverse of its gold coins (Brubaker and Haldon 2001: 122–3), Leo IV emphasized the dynastic claims of the family by naming his eldest son after his own father and by crowning him as co-emperor shortly after his own succession, in 776, when Constantine VI was 5 years old (*ODB* 501–2, 1209). Leo IV did not participate actively in the image struggle, and the punishments late in his reign that subsequent, pro-image authors attempted to describe as persecution of iconophiles (friends of images) seem in fact to have been in response to a political conspiracy against him, probably initiated by his half-brothers (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6272; Speck 1978: 53–5, 100; Rochow 1991: 226–7; Lilie 1996: 79–80).

Leo IV died while on campaign against the Bulgarians in 780. He was succeeded by his 9-year-old son, Constantine VI, while his widow Eirene assumed the regency. Constantine VI and Eirene's contribution to iconomachy was the restoration of images in 787.

Nicaea II and the Restoration of Image Veneration in 787

There is no indication that either Eirene or Constantine VI had any particular beliefs about the validity of image veneration before Leo IV's death, and it was only after

the installation of Tarasios, a layman rapidly promoted through the ecclesiastical ranks to qualify him for the post, as patriarch in 784 that a church council to restore images to favor was proposed. Eirene wrote to Pope Hadrian I in 785, informing him of this, and requesting the participation of Western churchmen (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6277). The first attempt to hold the council, in 786, was disrupted by dissident bishops and soldiers, and abandoned (Theophanes *Chron.* AM 6278). The protesting solders were dismissed, the bishops promised forgiveness, and the council, the second to be held in Nicaea and the last medieval ecumenical council ever to be held, was successfully convened in 787, though without the presence of most clergy from Constantinople (Mansi xiii, 408–13), perhaps because they had been the most vocally anti-image.

The official reason given by Tarasios for the change in policy was that the restoration of image veneration would reunify the church (Mansi xii, 999D). Certainly it formed part of Eirene's policy of rapprochement with the pope in Rome, who opposed the ban on religious images, and also served to undercut a potentially anti-Byzantine alliance between the papacy and the Carolingians (Auzépy 1995c). On a more local level, Tarasios made major efforts to unify the Orthodox community, and his tone throughout was conciliatory rather than vengeful. From an institutional point of view, it would seem that the restoration of image veneration was primarily based on a desire for unity; the texts produced by the Nicaea council of 787 would, however, have a lasting impact on the "thought world" of Byzantium and on Orthodox belief.

The Acts of Nicaea II supply much of our information about the arguments for and against the veneration of holy portraits (Mansi xiii; Sahas 1986), and also laid the groundwork for the theology of images that continues to this day in the Orthodox Church. The first three sessions were largely devoted to church discipline, including hearing renunciations of their previous iconoclast beliefs from all churchmen who had supported the ban on images, which was the vast majority of them. Only the final three concerned the actual role of sacred portraits in the church. Sessions four and five detailed the power of images as channels to divine presence and condemned iconoclast beliefs. Session six was dedicated to the theology of image veneration, and it focused on a renunciation and refutation of the iconoclast *Horos* of 754 (Auzépy 1999: 242–56). The refutation was based on two points: tradition and the incarnation. The argument that veneration of images was authorized by tradition was not strictly correct: as we have seen, this practice had become widespread only toward the end of the seventh century. That was, however, well before any of the participants in the 787 council had been born, and arguments based on the authority of tradition were anyway so powerful in the eighth and ninth centuries that it was always invoked, usually by both sides (Brubaker 1989: 49–55). To modern minds, the more powerful argument concerned the incarnation. The pro-image faction argued that Christ had been seen on earth; that what can be seen can be pictured; and that to refuse to allow the portrayal of Christ was to reject his physical appearance on earth—in other words, it was to deny the incarnation, the core tenet of Christianity (Mansi xiii, 241, 344; Auzépy 1987 and 1998; Brubaker 1999: 29–31). Finally, in the seventh session, the *Horos* of the council of 787 was read and signed

by all those present (Mansi xiii, 364–73 list of those present, 373–80 *Horos*, 380–97 list of signatories).

The Acts of the 787 Council created, for the first time, a systematic and formal "cult" of images. Aside from the brief restoration of the ban on images between 815 and 843, sacred portraits have ever since officially occupied a specific place in the Orthodox Church, and the practices associated with the veneration of images became an integral element of devotion. Every Orthodox Christian was, and still is, to perform *proskynesis* (kneeling or prostration) before holy images and to kiss them; and images are to be illuminated and accompanied by the burning of incense. Anyone refusing to obey these prescriptions was anathematized and declared a heretic (Mansi xiii, 377D–E).

The Reimposition of the Ban on Sacred Portraits

The period often known as "second iconoclasm" (Kaplan 2006 includes several essays on the theme) lasted from 815 until 842, and was dominated by three emperors: Leo V (813–20); Michael II (820–29); and his son Theophilos (senior emperor 829–42) (*ODB* 1363, 2066). After massive defeats on the battlefields of Makedonia and Thrace at the hands of the Bulgar khan Krum, Leo V appears to have reinstated the ban on sacred images in an attempt to propitiate God and to associate himself with the last emperor well known for his great military successes, Constantine V.

Under pressure from the emperor, the pro-image patriarch Nikephoros (806–15) abdicated, and was replaced by Theodotos Melissenos. For the first time, there was solid and vocal monastic opposition to the imperial iconoclast position, led by the abbot of the Stoudion monastery in Constantinople, Theodore; otherwise, however, there seems to have been only limited resistance to the changes, and Theodotos was enthroned at Easter 815 (Alexander 1958: 133–6). Both Leo V and his successor (and murderer) Michael II stressed that they were once again purifying the Church of unhealthy practices. This is particularly well expressed in Michael's letter to the Western emperor Louis the Pious in 824, where former malpractices are listed and it is explained that, in order to prevent the simpler and less-educated members of the Christian congregation from lighting candles and burning incense around images, and the clergy from celebrating the Eucharist with them, the pious emperors and learned priests have decreed that those images placed low down should be removed, and only those which are not subject to such misdirected veneration are to remain (Mansi xiv, 419–20; Eng. tr. in Mango 1972: 157–8).

The synod that ratified the reimposition of the ban on images in 815 was a fairly conciliatory document, but new arguments appeared. Religious portraits were no longer described as "idols" but were instead seen as incorrect, "false" images; a "true image" was no longer the Eucharist, but the true Christian, a human being made in God's image, in whose heart Christ dwells. A "true" image had to share in the essence of the original; hence, material, pictorial images were not genuine, but "falsely named," and thus not admissible. They certainly could not be endowed with divine grace (Alexander 1953: 41–5).

Whatever the actual beliefs of Leo V and Michael II, Church unity remained the overarching concern, just as it had been for Eirene and Tarasios. Public conformity with imperial policy was more important than ideology. While the veneration of sacred images was not tolerated in prominent public places, people were effectively permitted to do whatever they wished in private, as long as they recognized the legitimacy of the iconoclast patriarchate (see the *Life* of Makarios of Pelekete: 153–5).

The last iconoclast emperor, Theophilos, was perhaps a more active—though inconsistent—persecutor of those who continued to promote the veneration on sacred portraits (Signes Codoñer 1995: 403–45). The loss of Palermo in Sicily, the emperor's defeat at Muslim hands in Cappadocia in 831, and treasonous plotting against him by certain iconophiles in the capital, may have spurred Theophilos on. But a more comprehensive "persecution," beginning in 833, was directed at those not in communion with the official Church (Theophanes Continuatus 99–100), or who challenged the emperor's God-given authority (*Synax. CP*, 681–3; Mango 1977: 135–9), notably the famous *graptoi* ("marked with writing") brothers, so called because Theophilos is said to have had verses tattooed on their faces as punishment for their insubordination (*ODB* 2042, 2062). Again, public conformity with imperial policy was paramount, and many churchmen and monks complied. The later patriarch Ignatios (847–58, 867–77), for example, was abbot of a monastery which officially accepted the imperial policy and was in communion with the imperial Church (Karlin-Hayter 1977: 142; Karlin-Hayter 2001: 178); and, as the *Life* of Methodios makes clear, most monks supported the imperial line (Methodios *Life*: 1249). But even those who did not were not always punished: Methodios, vehemently pro-image, became a close associate of Theophilos (Karlin-Hayter 2001: 177–8; Treadgold 2004); and while claims that Theophilos's wife Theodora venerated icons in secret are later and unlikely to be true (Vinson 1998: 496), it is clear from the case of Methodios, first punished for his promotion of images, then recalled to Constantinople to advise the emperor Theophilos, that some pro-image sentiment was tolerated, even at court.

The So-called "Restoration of Orthodoxy"

Following the death of Theophilos, secular officials instigated the reversal of his iconoclast policies, after ensuring, apparently at his widow Theodora's insistence, that the former emperor would not be posthumously anathematized for his beliefs (Gouillard 1967; Karlin-Hayter 2001). Their main agenda seems to have been to remove a cause of internal dissension and factionalism within the dominant elite. After preliminary meetings in a private house, with only a few churchmen present, a synod was held in March 843, probably in the Blachernai palace (Zielke 1999: 229). The Acts of the Council of 787 were reconfirmed, and the chief iconoclasts of the period from 815 had their names added to the list of heretics drawn up in 787, although, to avoid stigmatizing the family in power, the name of the former emperor Theophilos was omitted. The iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian resigned, and

Methodios was appointed (Zielke 1999: 228–30). A formal procession from Blachernai to Hagia Sophia was followed by a solemn liturgy in the church itself, probably on March 11, the day later celebrated as the Feast of Orthodoxy to commemorate the restoration of image veneration. No dissent is recorded in the (admittedly partial) sources (Bury 1912: 148–51; Zielke 1999: 216–30). Iconomachy was officially over.

Conclusions: Representation and the Impact of Iconomachy

The main concept that the image debate sought to redefine was representation, and many of the erudite churchmen who have left a written record of their thoughts were quite clear on the distinction between different types of images. Their arguments are important for understanding the intellectual history of Byzantium, but they are largely beside the point for its social or even cultural history. Just as the Quinisext council followed and responded to a new role for the sacred portrait, so too the theology of both the veneration and the rejection of icons followed along, and either codified changes in social practice or attempted to limit them. By systematizing the role of sacred portraits in Orthodoxy, eighth- and ninth-century theologians created the *cult* of icons, but they did not create the desire to access the holy in a new way: rather, they justified and codified existing realities.

The problems with relying too heavily on the theology of icons for our understanding of issues of representation in Byzantium are well brought out by a recent analysis of patriarch Nikephoros's attack on the council of 815 that summarizes his arguments as: "Thus, when an icon is destroyed, it is an offence against the formal, that is to say, visible, properties of the one shown. One does not destroy Christ when one destroys his icon, rather one destroys the possibility of his becoming available to vision" (Barber 2002: 122). This is theologically correct, and part of a sophisticated chain of Aristotelian reasoning, developed in the later eighth and ninth centuries, that argued that the image was distinct from its subject and could not be confused with it: hence, icons were "truthful" precisely because they were manufactured (Alexander 1958: 189–213; Barber 2002: 107–23). But the passage can also be used to demonstrate the contrast between the theology of learned churchmen and the response to images considered appropriate in accounts of everyday situations. For the moment one moves outside of the realm of learned theological treatises, the properties of the sacred portrait so carefully distinguished by Nikephoros and his colleagues collapse. This is true not only of hagiography and miracle accounts, but also in letters by the same elevated churchmen who were careful to maintain the Aristotelian balance when writing icon theory. Theodore of Stoudion, for example, was perfectly conversant with the idea of the relative relationship between a portrait and the person portrayed that we have just noted in connection with Nikephoros; none the less, when writing a letter to the *spatharios* John, he praised him for replacing a human godfather with an icon of St Demetrios for "here the bodily image took the place of its model" and "the great martyr was spiritually present in his own image and so received the infant" (Theodore of Stoudion, *Epistle*. I, 17; tr. Mango 1972: 174–5).

What we are seeing here is, on one level, an exemplification of the importance of context: theological treatises require the careful formulation of image theory; letters to friends are less formal. But the difference between the theological understanding of the sacred portrait and the day-to-day reception of the same image was not only about different registers of response: it was also about different understandings of representation. To Theodore of Stoudion, an icon of St Demetrios could be both a panel painting, differentiated from the saint, and sharing with Demetrios only likeness, not essence (see Barber 2002: 122–3), *and* a manifestation of the saint, standing in for the real Demetrios, who is "spiritually present in his own image." It is the former, theological sense of representation that prevented icons from being idols; it is the latter, everyday sense of representation that the faithful kiss when they enter a church, and which became part of Byzantine self-identity. The "theological" icon is not "a self-effacing doorway that opens upon another place, but rather a signpost whose insistent presence directs us elsewhere" (Barber 2002: 137); and the Byzantines did not interact with an icon understood in this way, they *contemplated* it. But the icon as manifestation—the icon as an embodiment of real presence—*is* "a self-effacing doorway," leading to the saint depicted; and the Byzantines *collaborated* with icons understood in this way, through veneration. Such collaboration with the image—through, for example, kissing or installing it as a godfather—allowed the Byzantines to use icons to represent themselves, and even today the artisanal product most commonly associated with the Byzantines is the icon.

The acceptance of sacred portraits as mediators with the divine did not need this dual understanding of representation: it only required the second, a belief in the icon as real presence. The desire for additional and enhanced access to the holy was, as we have seen, a product of the serial crises of the seventh century. But, as at least some churchmen were quick to realize, accepting real presence in icons had the potential to unleash uncontrolled, and uncontrollable, rights to the sacred, for icons were infinitely reproducible. The Quinisext council began the process of regulating Orthodox imagery, but it was really only after the iconoclast backlash instigated by Thomas of Klaudioupoulos and Constantine of Nakoleia in the 720s, and especially in the early ninth century, that rules and regulations—the theology of icons—were fully developed, and the "theological" icon was born. The major change was, however, earlier: the recognition of "real presence" in holy portraits around 680, which marked the beginning of the medieval Orthodox Byzantine state.

FURTHER READING

Bryer and Herrin 1977 is an important collection of conference papers on the topic of Byzantine iconoclasm which has formed one of the standard references in the field. Brown 1973 sets iconoclasm into a socio-political context. Brubaker 1998 offers a redefinition. Brubaker and Haldon 2001 collects and discusses sources. Barber 2002 looks at theology and also debates the distinction between "icon" and "art."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Renaissance

John Hanson

The concept of a tenth-century renaissance in the arts in Byzantium, once a central fixture in Byzantine art history, has more recently become an obsolete device collecting dust in the attic. The notion that artists of the tenth century systematically revived the artistic values of the Greek and Roman past has been discarded because it relies on outdated beliefs about genius and evolution, and risks a misleading analogy to the humanistic Renaissance of fifteenth-century Italy. For these reasons, the use of the term itself has subsided, appearing only in inverted commas, or with qualifiers such as "so-called." Having lost the battle with the new art history, the tenth-century renaissance is generally passed over in favor of more vital contemporary concerns, such as the operation of the visual, the significance of iconoclasm, gender issues, material cultural history, and others. Thus, the concept, and many of the objects once associated with it, have been ignored. The aim of this chapter is threefold. I begin by examining the origins of the notion of a tenth-century renaissance in the scholarship on Byzantine art. Then I trace the reasons for the critique of the concept. Finally I ask whether there is room in the new art history for an alternative construction of the borrowing of styles and themes from the classical past. Ultimately, I am asking not "Why does classical culture continue to insinuate itself into post-classical culture?" but rather "What ends did this particular version of Greco-Roman themes and styles serve for medieval Byzantines?"

But first, consider a couple of the monuments in question. Much of Byzantine art of the tenth century incorporates stylistic traits and even subject matter from ancient Greece and Rome of the pre-Christian era. For this reason, art historians dubbed this period the "Tenth-Century Renaissance" or the "Macedonian Renaissance" (after the Macedonian dynasty that dominated the throne from 867 to 1056). Renaissance, literally "rebirth," seemed an inevitable designation for the reappearance of Greek mythological figures and the return to the naturalistic representational values of ancient Greece. We can see it, for example, in an illustration from a de luxe psalter, now in Paris, which depicts David composing the Psalms (Figure 26.1). To give an impression of the poetic beauty of the Psalms, the artist has given David not only a

Figure 26.1. *David Composing the Psalms*, Paris Psalter, fol. 1v.

lyre, but also a beautiful seated female figure, labeled "Melody," apparently the Muse who inspires his composition. This figure recalls the ancient past, not just because of the classical tendency to use personifications, but also because of her natural three-quarters pose and subtly modeled draperies. Kurt Weitzmann cited a figure of Io from a Pompeiian wall painting as a specific model (Weitzmann 1929, 1963) (Figure 26.2). Renaissance seemed an eminently appropriate word to describe this relationship.

One of the most curious, but most admired, of Byzantine art objects is a tenth-century ivory box in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the so-called Veroli casket (Figures 26.3 and 26.4). This object figures conspicuously in the construction of the tenth-century renaissance. Critical admiration for the reliefs derives from the deftly carved figures, only about 7 cm tall, who, on account of their naturalism in both anatomy and movement, and their subtly modeled draperies, recall the classical style of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. As for the content, the themes are likewise classicizing, drawing from Greek mythology, such as the Rape of Europa, Bellerophon and Pegasus, Hippolytos and Phaedra, Ares and Aphrodite, and the Sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis (Figure 26.4). In the latter, the central group

Figure 26.2. *Io*. Wall painting from the House of Meleager, Pompeii.

Image not available in the electronic edition

Figure 26.3. The Veroli casket. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Image not available in the electronic edition

Figure 26.4. *Sacrifice of Iphigeneia*, detail from the Veroli casket. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

represents Iphigeneia guided by Achilles towards the priest Calchas, who cuts a lock of her hair. According to Euripides, Iphigeneia's father Agamemnon tricks her into coming to Aulis by promising that she will wed Achilles. In fact, he is planning to sacrifice her to appease Artemis, who has becalmed the Greek fleet on their way to fight Troy. When Agamemnon reveals his intention, Iphigeneia is distressed at first, but acquiesces for the greater cause of the war on Troy. At the moment of sacrifice, however, Artemis spirits her away and supplies a deer as a substitute sacrifice. The moment depicted here is the moment immediately before the sacrifice. Many ancient artists depicted this scene, most famously Timanthes, whose version is known from Pausanias's description and a Roman wall painting in Pompeii (Figure 26.5). The intrusion of this pagan theme into the staunchly Christian context of tenth-century Byzantium begs for explanation.

Moreover, there appears to be an exact classical model for this composition. The figures correspond almost exactly to figures from an ancient Roman altar in the Uffizi in Florence (Figures 26.6 and 26.7). This demonstrable connection would appear to confirm the notion of a rebirth of classical art, and indeed has been taken as sufficient cause in itself for the application of the term renaissance (Seznec 1953). For all of these reasons, the Veroli casket has been used as the ultimate illustration of the phenomenon of classicism in the tenth century. John Beckwith (Beckwith 1962: 1) described it as "a document of primary importance for attesting to the literary tastes of the Byzantine court and the continuity of the classical tradition at Constantinople in the Middle Ages." It should come as no surprise that it played a significant role in the construction of the tenth-century renaissance.

The Construction of the Tenth-Century Renaissance

Kurt Weitzmann was the key player in the construction of the Macedonian renaissance, beginning with his dissertation research on Byzantine ivory caskets (see

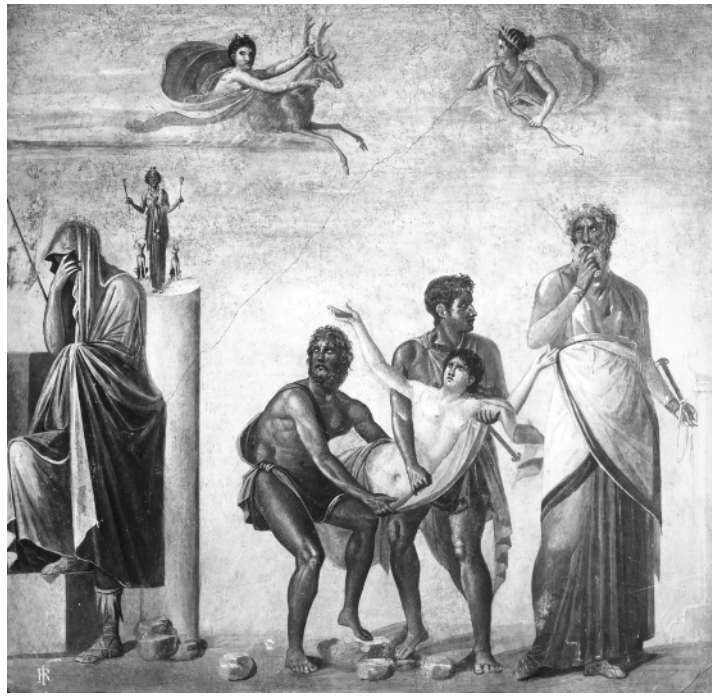


Figure 26.5. *The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia* (after Timanthes). Painting from the House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii.

Weitzmann 1930 and 1934). He immediately observed the classical sources, but took another key step before finally formulating his notion of the Byzantine renaissance. On the basis of certain carvings which appeared to be copied from manuscript paintings, he speculated that ancient and early Christian illustrated manuscripts of classical texts had survived into the Middle Ages. These hypothetical manuscripts, he argued, had formed the basis for the classicizing ivories. He quite soundly supposed that, given the ephemeral nature of medieval manuscripts, the few that have survived into modern times formed just a remnant of what must have once existed. By contrast, ivory carvings are durable, and difficult to reuse, and therefore have survived in greater quantities. He came to believe, then, that the key to understanding classicism in the tenth century lay not in examining the surviving ivory carvings, but in reconstructing the lost manuscripts, whose character and even details could be deduced by looking at their reflections in the later, surviving manuscripts and ivories that depend on them. He dubbed this method text criticism, referring to the paleographic method by which scholars endeavor to reconstruct the lost original text of a given piece of writing by working backwards from later copies (Weitzmann 1947). This scenario became so compelling that he reformulated his study of the ivory carvings, recasting them in the role of surviving reflections of these hypothetical sets of lost manuscripts (Weitzmann 1951). His conclusion in the case of the Iphigeneia relief was not that the

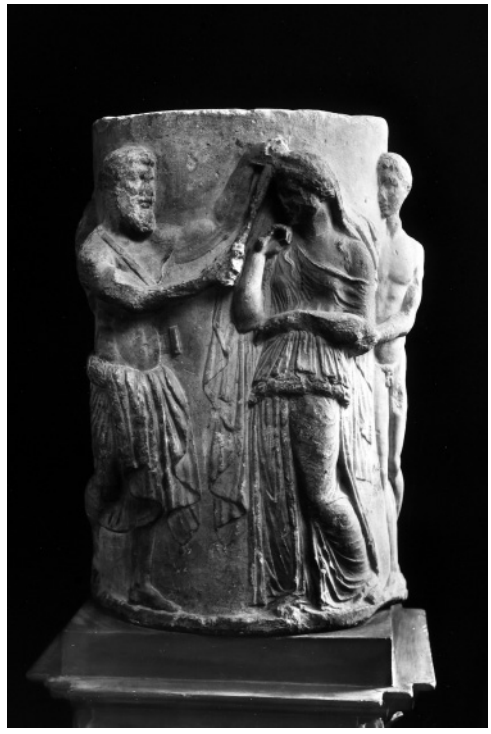


Figure 26.6. Cleomenes altar: *Sacrifice of Iphigeneia*.

tenth-century ivory was copied directly from the Roman sculpture, but that both images were copied from a hypothetical, now-lost ancient illustrated book of the plays of Euripides (Weitzmann 1939). So, Weitzmann's narrative of the Macedonian renaissance described the survival, rediscovery, and reuse of potent classical models and the revitalization of the languishing medieval tradition.

Weitzmann's narrative fueled another common doctrine in medieval art history, namely the powerful sway of Byzantine influence. Art historians have always characterized Byzantine art as the preserver of the classical tradition, if somewhat changed. Western art, by contrast, is the second-hand recipient of that classical tradition through the Byzantine mediator. This long-established tradition casts the Byzantine East in the role of an early modern academy, the transmitter of artistic traditions and protector of standards, preserving the classical tradition, and passing on elements to Western Europe (see Kitzinger 1966; Demus 1970). There are, of course, demonstrable cases of Byzantine influence which do indeed enrich our understanding of medieval art (Kitzinger 1949; Demus 1950). In many other cases, however, the demonstration of Byzantine influence is treated as an end in itself, as if lineage to the classical past through Byzantium somehow legitimates a Western art object.

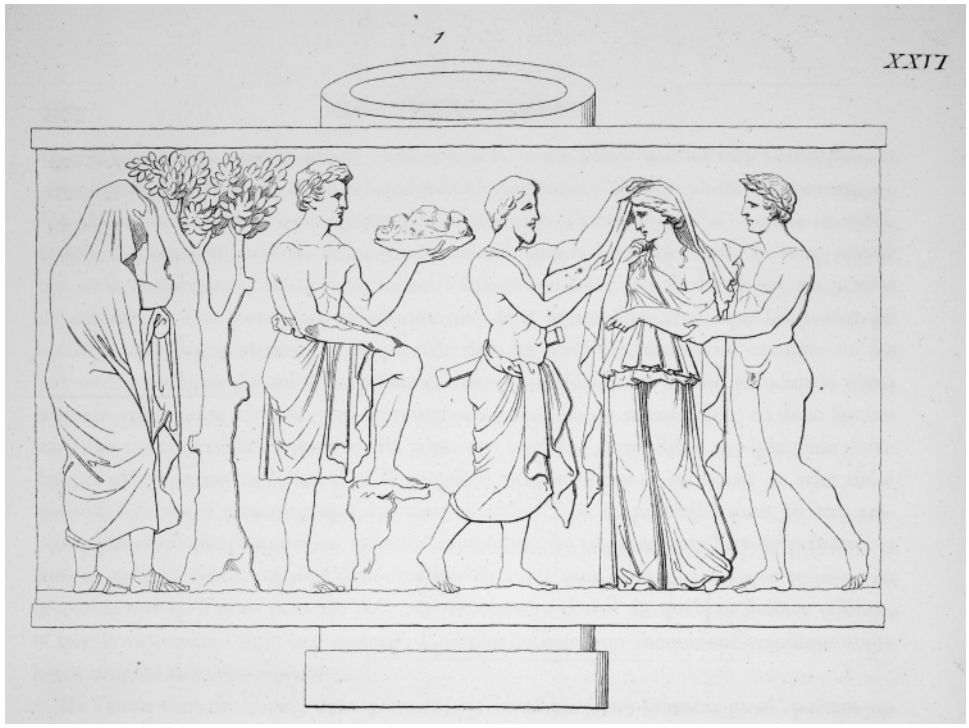


Figure 26.7. Cleomenes altar: *Sacrifice of Iphigeneia*.

In short, the Macedonian Renaissance, as conceived by Weitzmann and other Byzantine art historians, celebrated the classical genius by describing its inevitable revival in a later period. More than this, from an early time, authors freely expressed their approval of the classicism they saw in Byzantine art. Nikodim Kondakov describes the onset of medieval style as a "decadence," literally languishing in the vacuum that followed the end of the classical past (Kondakov 1886–91: 9). Hugo Buchthal rejoices approvingly in the classicizing developments of the tenth century which replaced what he lamented as the "lifeless, traditional style prevailing in [Constantinople] in the later years of the ninth century" (Buchthal 1938: 78). The Byzantine renaissance, when narrated by Kondakov, Buchthal, and Weitzmann is not a neutral development. It is the story of the persistence and eventual triumph of the superior tradition over the ineffectual medieval interval.

Debunking the Macedonian Renaissance

Given the rational construction of the tenth-century renaissance, and given the clear demonstration of classical sources in at least some cases, why then do modern authors

often discredit the Macedonian renaissance, or ignore it altogether? In part, the uneasiness derives from the general unsuitability of the term renaissance to medieval Byzantine culture. More specifically, confidence in Weitzmann's method of reconstructing hypothetical manuscripts has faltered.

The general applicability of the term may be questioned by referring to Erwin Panofsky's *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Panofsky 1960). This important book seeks to identify the defining and necessary characteristics of a true renaissance. One of Panofsky's requirements is that there must be a break with the past before a renaissance can reasonably be said to take place. This criterion poses a very real problem for the tenth-century renaissance in that this supposed rebirth is situated in history among many other such rebirths. The "Golden Age of Justinian" in the sixth century, with its recuperation of lost parts of the empire, and the attendant brilliance and classicism in architecture and painting, has been characterized as a renaissance (Grabar 1967). Scholars have also posited renaissances after the tenth century during the reign of the Komnenes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and under the Palaiologans in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Even the period of the iconoclastic controversy in the eighth and ninth centuries has been characterized as a sort of renaissance on account of the renewed research into ancient texts that the controversy required (Lemerle 1971: 112–47). If all of these phenomena qualify as renaissances, then we are confronted with the paradox of continual renaissance. Is it possible to have a rebirth when there has not been a death since the last rebirth? (Weitzmann 1971: 181). More recently, Byzantinists have begun to favor the concept of cultural continuity. That is, the traditional narrative constructed to understand fifteenth-century Italy, where artists, writers, and scientists rediscover and intrusively reapply classical values after the anti-classical interval of the middle ages, does not seem to apply to the tenth century in Byzantium, which existed in a continuity with the Roman imperial past, free from interruption by the Germanic invasions which disrupted Western European culture. In this way, Byzantine culture is characterized as an extension of Roman culture, not a revival of it (Heisenberg 1926; Weiss 1977; Kazhdan and Cutler 1982). Continuity, as a general principle, is an important value of Byzantine culture, one embedded in religious discourse where heresy and innovation are used almost interchangeably. The lack of a break with the past takes a bit of the bite out of the word renaissance.

Another of Panofsky's criteria is self-consciousness. Artists and humanists in fifteenth-century Florence understood themselves as reviving the lost traditions of antiquity. The same self-consciousness is much harder to demonstrate among Byzantine artists. Indeed, the mythological miniatures that Weitzmann adduces in *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* are illustrated commentaries on the *Sermons* of the fourth-century bishop Gregory of Nazianzos, clearly directed to an audience which is no longer familiar with Gregory's allusions. Even when Byzantine humanists do refer to themselves as part of a renaissance or renewal, they seem to be referring to a continuity, rather than an innovation (Hunger 1965: 369).

Panofsky further asserted that a true renaissance is a pervasive phenomenon, embracing art and literature. Here again, tenth-century Byzantium does not comply. Byzantine literature seems to follow its own course, quite independently of art, as regards the return to ancient subjects and forms. Classicism in Byzantine literature

follows a different chronology from Classicism in the visual arts. It is the ninth century that sees a great flourishing of the copying and editing of classical texts, a scholarly pursuit that led, not only to appreciation, but also to emulation of such classical forms as the erotic epigram. The reading of these epigrams, however, was characterized as morally dangerous, and not really taken up again in earnest until the end of the eleventh century, when classicizing forms were again favored, as with the revival of the romance and epic poetry (Lauxtermann 1999). The supposed renaissance in art follows a very different course. In fact, the objects normally cited to justify the Macedonian renaissance actually occupy the tenth-century interval in literary humanism. The erotic and romantic themes of the ivory caskets such as the Veroli casket place them between the erotic epigrams of the ninth century and the romances of the eleventh and twelfth. Literature and art, then, develop in isolation from each other in Byzantium, not as parts of a general renaissance. For these and other reasons, contemporary scholars have lost confidence in the applicability of the term renaissance to Byzantine art under the Macedonian rulers of the tenth century.

Beyond these general worries, contemporary scholars have begun also to re-evaluate Weitzmann's methods and assumptions. To a certain extent, such re-evaluation is bound to occur for any method that relies so strongly on hypothetical or reconstructed objects. That is, before we can really judge whether a tenth-century copy of a first-century Euripides manuscript constitutes a renaissance, we need to first agree that such a manuscript existed. It is, in fact, a little difficult to argue against these suppositions, partly because Weitzmann was probably right to assume that most ancient and medieval manuscripts have been lost; and partly because his complex recensions of imagery are so very ingenious and well observed. The most difficult obstacle, however, is that these things simply do not exist. Weitzmann's hypothetical manuscripts are free to operate, therefore, without fear of contradiction except from contrary hypothetical evidence. A significant criticism of Weitzmann's method appeared in 1992 in the form of John Lowden's study *The Octateuchs. A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Lowden 1992). This book re-examined manuscripts that Weitzmann had earlier submitted to his method of picture criticism. Weitzmann had placed the octateuchs in a carefully constructed recension, arguing that they together offered evidence of the pre-existence of ancient Roman illustrated books. Lowden's study, analyzing the same material, using some of the same codicological methods, argued that the octateuchs were not, after all, copies from ancient manuscripts, but rather the results of an eleventh- and twelfth-century initiative. Part of the importance of Lowden's study is that it uses many of the same methods of iconographic comparison, and yet concludes with a contrary opinion, that the surviving manuscripts do not mask a longer tradition. While Lowden's study did not absolutely invalidate Weitzmann's method, it did, nevertheless, draw attention to its pitfalls.

Lowden's study focused on manuscripts. I believe it also offers valuable lessons in broader terms for the interpretation of reused imagery. By treating existing monuments as evidence of lost monuments, we are doing more than simply running the risk of untestable errors. Are we not also biasing our research in favor of antiquity? What I am suggesting is, if we examine Byzantine art for what it can reveal about

ancient Greek art, are we not, like Kondakov, Buchthal, and Weitzmann before us, privileging the ancient over the medieval, the revived over the revivers? When Weitzmann speaks of the ability of Euripides' text to "stimulate the imagination in the representational arts …," he is ascribing a certain potency to the ancient (written) text, while simultaneously characterizing the medieval visual reinterpretation in a passive role (Weitzmann 1949: 184–5). The casting of the ancient tradition in a potent, assertive role, and medieval culture in a passive role, is typical of his writing. Weitzmann's method does not simply identify resemblances. It implies agency. Weitzmann ascribes to Euripides a power to influence artists, as if by some sort of magnetic field. In reality, it is the artists depicting Iphigeneia at Aulis that are in the active role. They may express any number of motivations: a commission from a patron; a likely sale; knowledge of some vogue; a desire to depict idealized nudes; an attraction for melodrama; a penchant for damsels in distress. And they may adopt any number of attitudes towards the tradition: reviving; revising; reinterpreting; satirizing; exalting. Each of these lively alternatives has its own story to tell about the appearance of Iphigeneia in the tenth century. In the end, the construction of the Macedonian renaissance has contributed little to our understanding of medieval Byzantine culture. By zooming in on Iphigeneia's ancient sources, we may in fact be focusing on the least interesting aspect of the image.

Why Iphigeneia in the Tenth Century? Towards a Rereading of Revival

What would happen if we were to leave aside the question of ancient sources for the style and content of the Iphigeneia relief, and ask instead what its significance might have been in tenth-century Christian Constantinople? It is, after all a very evocative story involving war, love, divine justice, sacrifice, and heroism. Surely the motivation for choosing this melodramatic theme is a more intriguing historical question than the question of its ultimate origins. It seems unlikely that the story could have carried the same significance for tenth-century viewers of the ivory as it had for fourth-century BC viewers of Euripides' play (Glicksohn 1985). The question, then, is not so much, "Why did the theme of Iphigeneia continue to insinuate itself into post-classical culture?" but rather "Why did medieval Christian Constantinopolitan artisans and patrons select it for an object like this?"

Indeed, as a class of objects, Byzantine ivory boxes bear a fascinating set of themes, with complex implications for their function. We should first consider that, unlike the *Myriobiblion* of Photios or the *Palatine Anthology*, these boxes were not used like books, stored in libraries for the use of a scholarly élite. They appear to have been used in the home. Given the literary character of the subject matter and the presumed expense of the materials, these homes must have been privileged ones. Given the predominance of erotic themes, and one box that includes what appears to be a wedding of an imperial couple, they may have been commissioned as wedding gifts (Cutler and Oikonomides 1988). Though this is a tentative suggestion, scholars have largely adopted it for want of any better idea. In the context of the discussion of

renaissance, it is particularly interesting to note that the erotic themes run through both the mythological and the Old Testament narratives. The series of mythological lovers, in varying states of harmony, are echoed in the Old Testament stories which range from the partnership of Adam and Eve to the sexual intrigues between Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and Tamar and Amon. Meyer Schapiro called the Old Testament "the most secular part of the Bible, its pagan aspect" (Schapiro 1949: 170), a notion that provides an alternative to the strict exegetical framework with which we normally approach Old Testament literature. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, a tale of a family divided and reunited, of a hero tested and vindicated, shares the same literary disposition as the some of the Greek myths. So, one criterion for the selection of Old Testament themes appear to be, as with the mythological ones, their relevance to the game of love.

The progress of love as depicted in these images is not without its pitfalls or even fatal dangers. As Erika Simon pointed out, the illicit desire and treachery of mythological *femmes fatales* such as Sthenoboea and Phaedra parallel the corresponding treachery of Old Testament women such as Eve and Potiphar's wife (Simon 1964). This is not to mention the many rape scenes—Lapiths and Centaurs, Europa and the Bull, and Zeus and Ganymede—which equally emphasize the potentially violent side of love. The selection of themes speaks to a sort of erotophobia, as if erotic passion were perilously linked to calamity. To medieval Christians, decorum and caution were the watchwords of sexual conduct. Does medieval moral censure, though, explain the presence of Iphigeneia or other mythological scenes on the Veroli casket? The general tenor of the imagery on ivory boxes is frivolous, lighthearted, and even boisterous. As Anthony Cutler noted in a key article about these boxes, the saucy imagery does not conform to the solemn severity we often ascribe to Byzantine culture (Cutler 1984–5). Neither is there any attempt to Christianize the myth, as later writers would, by making of it a type of the sacrifice of Isaac, and, by extension, a type of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Had the carvers wanted to suggest this interpretation, they could easily have done so by including the stag that Artemis substitutes for Iphigeneia at the last minute, a motif that appears in ancient Roman reliefs.

So, neither moral censure nor Christianization of a pagan myth seem to have motivated the choice of Iphigeneia. There is, though, another medieval tradition that such sexual perils would fit into, namely the medieval literary genre of romance. Traditional art historical approaches to the Macedonian renaissance would never encourage exploration of this characteristically post-classical genre, though it may be worthwhile. Though not quite developed in the tenth century, the romances that appear in the following two centuries are centered on erotic themes, usually the longings of young lovers, always beset by series of improbable reverses in fortune. The road to love in the medieval Greek romance is paved with dangers, betrayals, and yes, even abductions. In these narratives, the many twists of fate that lovers suffer are not moralizing, but entertaining. These boxes, with their jumble of courtships, abductions, betrayals, and revelry, have more to do with late-antique and medieval novels than with the serious, earnest themes of classical tragedy. The owners of the Veroli casket would have viewed its imagery in the same way that readers of romances

would have read of the trials and tribulations of romantic heroes and heroines (Hanson 1999). The medieval romance presumes an audience with an appetite for bizarre and unhappy sexual narratives. Christian sexual tolerance was apparently relative, or at least, held literary figures to a different standard than real people. While in the discourse of the church and in official teaching, people could easily denounce sexual practices in general, in the more informal arenas of romance and the decorative arts, the same audience took pleasure in sexual misfortune itself as an endearing human failing. This trivialization of the perils of love reflects, not Middle Byzantine homiletic morality, but certain social realities of medieval life, such as the status of women as the property of their fathers and husbands, the related institution of dowries, and the passivity expected of women in the establishment of sexual relationships.

Where does the theme of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia fit against the backdrop of the general theme of the perils of love depicted in ivory? On the surface of it, the central group of the young couple in front of the priest resembles a wedding scene. Indeed, this irony existed in the ancient versions of the myth, as Agamemnon tricked Iphigeneia into coming to Aulis by the promise of marriage to Achilles. The only indication that this is not actually a wedding scene is the priest's upraised knife, cutting off a lock of her hair, the action that indicates the turn of Iphigeneia's fate, her impending immolation. The narrative of a budding romance turning into a calamity here takes center stage. To the medieval viewer, this turn of events would parallel other equally perilous affairs depicted on the plaque just to the left of this one, namely Hippolytos and Phaedra, and Bellerophon and Sthenoboea. Iphigeneia's near demise, though not the direct result of her romance with Achilles, is here synchronized with it. Thus, the irony of the situation is characterized as a romantic, rather than a tragic, irony. This is emphasized by the rather vague secondary details of the accompanying figures. If Agamemnon had been clearly represented, as he is on the Roman altar, and in Timanthes' famous painting, the viewer's attention might have been drawn to the more political aspects of the myth (Figs 26.5, 26.6, 26.7). For Euripides, the driving force of the play is the necessity of Agamemnon's campaign against Troy, not the romance with Achilles. Euripides' Iphigeneia plays the part of the self-sacrificing heroine, whose decision to offer herself to Artemis was based on the philosophical principle that the needs of the state outweigh the needs of the individual. She submits willingly to the knife to allow her father to lead the Greek armies against their sworn enemies. The eclipsing of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra serves to focus attention on the ill-fated couple. By casting the story among a series of stories of love gone wrong, the image speaks eloquently of medieval attitudes about the perils of love. This is so, not in spite of, but precisely because of, the nonchalance and prettiness of the scene. These boxes, operating as *objets d'art* in wealthy homes, were quite clearly designed to entertain, rather than to edify.

How does all this relate to the question of whether these boxes were part of a renaissance? The classical stylistic elements, especially the naturalistic depiction of nude figures in contrapposto stances and the Roman draperies, seem to relate more to the secular nature of the themes than they do to a return to ancient artistic values. As other art historians have observed, the adoption of classical motifs and style may

be an affectation, intended to denote a certain erudition on the part of the owner (Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1985; Belting 1994). The style of this box makes it a curiosity; a miniature casket carved in the ancient style. Indeed, it is precisely its preciousness that makes the object an acceptable marginal zone to display erratic eroticism. If the same themes were approached in a familiar ecclesiastical style, or in modern-day dress, the audience might not accept so readily the scenes of rape and sexual peril that are displayed here. The Classicism here acts as a veil through which the viewer can observe and enjoy these risqué stories. The classical themes and stylizations were not adopted owing to some rediscovery of the noble Greco-Roman tradition. Rather, they were adopted as a sort of distancing veil or filter which made it possible to indulge in what were officially illicit desires. In the end, these Euripidean scenes are not so Euripidean after all. They deal more with the special medieval brand of moralizing chatter which exists around marginal zones, such as the upper-class coffee table. The informal morality and sexuality of such reliefs, just like the informal morality and sexuality of the later romance, has been freed to survive and thrive in this context. In the context of official church teaching, narratives of dangerous desire were put to much graver polemic ends.

What I think this excursus on the Iphigeneia's relief suggests is that the categorization of such reappearances of mythological motifs as a renaissance has had more negative consequences than just missing the point. It has stultified study of these monuments on their own terms as documents of medieval material culture. This reconceptualizing of Iphigeneia as a damsel in distress, keeping company with Europa, Hippolytos, Bellerophon, and the erotes, says very little about tenth-century humanistic scholarship. It speaks eloquently of social and sexual attitudes of the tenth-century owners who enjoyed the myths for their entertainment value. In short, the Macedonian renaissance has been discarded because it is at best a convenient shorthand for essentializing the art of the tenth century. At its worst, it can deflect, and has deflected, attention from more lively questions.

FURTHER READING

Weitzmann 1951 and 1971 are the classic expositions of the concept of a Macedonian renaissance. For discussions of Weitzmann's methodology, see Lowden 1992. Treadgold (ed.) 1984 discusses ideas of renaissances both in a Byzantine context and more widely. On Byzantium's relationship with the classical past, see Mullett and Scott (eds) 1981; Lemerle 1986.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

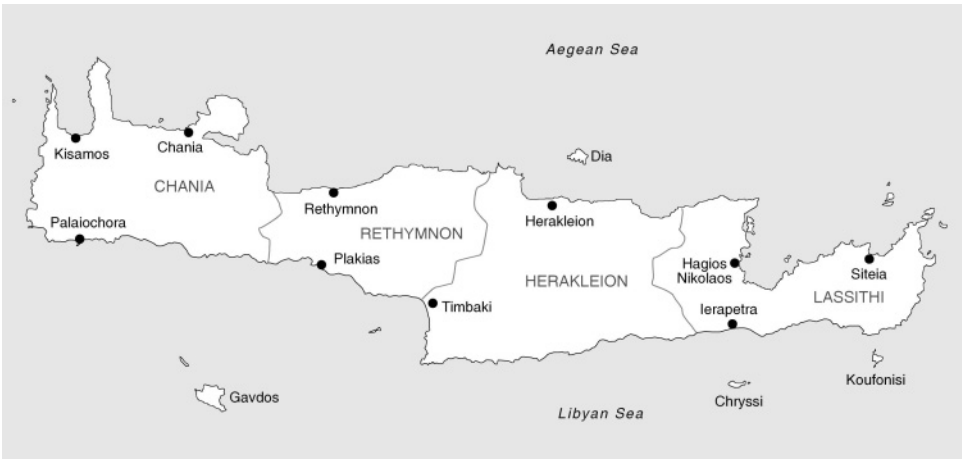
Late and Post-Byzantine Art under Venetian Rule: Frescoes versus Icons, and Crete in the Middle

Angeliki Lymberopoulou

The two falls of Constantinople are historic milestones for Crete. After the first, to the troops of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the island ceased to be part of the Byzantine political realm and fell to the Venetians as one of the spoils they took from the conquered empire. Following a brief struggle with the Genoese, they managed to establish their hegemony over Crete from 1211 onwards, thus initiating what was undoubtedly one of the most prolific cultural and artistic periods in the long Cretan history, which ended only when the Venetians in their turn ceded their dominion to the Ottoman Turks in 1669 (Maltezou 1988 and 1991). The second fall of Constantinople, to Mehmed II in 1453, marked the point when the Greek Orthodox artists of Crete substituted the fallen imperial capital for Venice as their principal point of reference. What this chapter intends to do is consider the interactions between these two cultures in artistic terms, in particular in the relationship between wall paintings and icons as media in the late and post-Byzantine periods.

That the latter transition was a smooth one was due in no small degree to the fact that the two ethnically different segments of the population, the native Greek Orthodox and the Venetian Roman-Catholic colonists, had begun to develop forms of social interaction and had shown themselves receptive to each other's culture from at least the early fourteenth century onwards. In fact, the successful cohabitation and increasing integration of the two groups over a period of four-and-a-half centuries make Crete a unique case study for long-term processes of cultural cross-fertilization. Furthermore, the artistic cross-fertilization that took place transcends local importance. It was the hybrid Cretan art which, after the termination of the empire, formed the cradle of the so-called post-Byzantine artistic tradition, a tradition that continued beyond the subjugation of Crete itself on the Venetian Ionian islands and into the modern era.

Artistically, Venetian-dominated Crete is renowned for its frescoes and its icons. Because of major urban redevelopment in the cities on the north coast, the majority

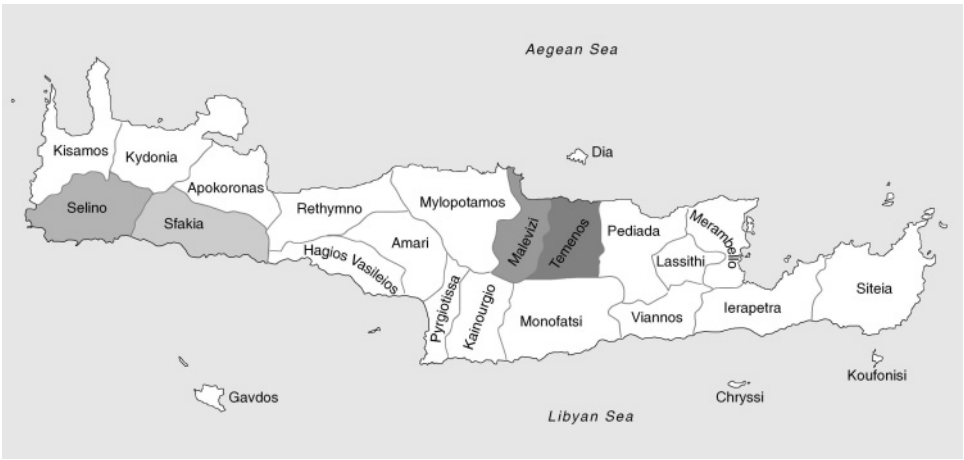


Map 27.1. Map of Crete with the four prefectures.

of the fresco decorations survive in the small provincial churches scattered across the island. By contrast, icons seem to have been produced primarily in the cities, with the capital Candia, modern-day Herakleion, undoubtedly being the most important center (Map 27.1). The two artistic media have been the subject of a substantial volume of scholarly publications. Yet, while many Cretan experts carry out research in both fields, their publications have so far treated Cretan frescoes and icons as two separate entities. There is no survey that offers an in-depth comparison, although such a study would undoubtedly provide a fuller picture of the artistic production and its patronage (Maderakis 2008a).

The distinction scholars have made between Cretan frescoes and icons is not only a technical, but also a chronological and artistic one. The productional peak of Cretan fresco painting seems to have been reached during the fourteenth century, with dwindling numbers of new works being created during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The production of icons, on the other hand, seems to have started in earnest during the fifteenth century, and grown exponentially from then until the seventeenth century. Moreover, frescoes, even during the post-Byzantine period, tended to be stylistically and iconographically conservative, while Cretan icons showed a much greater incorporation of un-Orthodox, Western elements from the start. It is tempting, of course, to see the difference as simply a matter of the ever-growing Venetian cultural influence on the island, but the historical reality, as always, appears to have been more complicated.

As was mentioned above, the majority of the surviving churches with fresco decorations are in the rural areas of Crete. Out of the four prefectures of the island, Rethymnon is the one which includes relatively the largest number of churches, approximately one for every 8 km^2. Yet it is the province of Selino, in the southwestern part of the prefecture of Chania (Map 27.2), which holds the crown in terms of church density, with one church for every 3.14 km^2. Selino's statistics are very impres-



Map 27.2. Map of Crete with the nineteen provinces.

sive and cannot be matched by any of the remaining 19 Cretan provinces. The province of Amari in the prefecture of Rethymnon is the closest second, with one church for every 4.01 km^2.

It would be too simplistic, however, to argue that the traditional "Byzantine" character of the majority of the frescoes was simply owing to their distance from the urban centers where Venetian colonists and native Greek Orthodox mingled to the largest extent. From the beginning, the Venetians appear to have taken an active interest in the commercial possibilities of the Cretan countryside, and went to great lengths to impose their rule (Lymberopoulou forthcoming a). They built castles, where Venetian officials and soldiers lived and interacted with the natives.

An explanation for Selino's intense building activity, for instance, may have been that the province acquired relative prosperity through trade with the Venetian rulers, possibly in wood and cheese (Lymberopoulou forthcoming a). The Venetians colonized the coast-line of the province early, erecting a fortress at Palaiochora in 1282, almost a century before the fortress constructed in neighboring Sfakia in 1374 (For Palaiochora, Lymberopoulou 2006: 3; Gasparis 2008: 72–3, 74; for Sfakia, Andrianakis 1998: 12–13). Clearly, social exchanges between Venetians and natives must have taken place in such rural regions as well, perhaps even particularly in areas where many conservatively decorated churches were built.

The local interaction between Venetians and natives is confirmed by the fact that some of the donors of the churches had no inhibitions against being depicted dressed in contemporary Western attire. The portraits of the male patrons in the church of the Archangel Michael at Kavalariana, Kandanos, Selino, dated 1327–8 and signed by a certain Ioannis, illustrate this point (On the painter, Lymberopoulou 2006: esp. 129–84). The garments in two colors worn by the donors Georgios, Theodoros, and Michael Kotzis, and Demetrios Sideris, are known as "particolored," or "mi-parti" (Figure 27.1): Georgios's and Demetrios's are brick-red on the upper left and bottom

Figure 27.1. Ioannis, donors in the nave (from left to right: female child, Manuel Melisourgos, Nikitas Sideris, Katerini [Sideri], Demitrios [Sideris]), 1327–8.

right, and white on the upper right and bottom left, while for the remaining two the color combination is the opposite. This type of outfit was connected to heraldry, a Western feudal phenomenon that did not exist in Byzantium, and suggests the wearers were either in the service of or allied with a Venetian patrician family with its own coat of arms. A comparable example from Western painting can be found in the chapel of St Martin at Assisi, painted by Simone Martini in 1315–17. In the fresco depicting St Martin receiving his knighthood, one of the musicians in the background to the right wears a garment which is checkered green and white on the left, and green on the right side.

The contrast between the appearance of the Kavalariana donors and the traditional look of the religious frescoes within their church underlines that cultural interaction in secular life could co-exist with strong constraints when it came to Orthodox religious monumental painting. The first impression the Cretan churches give the viewer is that of a strong "Byzantine character," which is closely connected to the principles of the Greek Orthodox Church. It seems that these deep-rooted practices, which were of course most strongly connected to the sites where the liturgical ritual was conducted, were the predominant influence on the style and iconography of regional painting. Even fresco cycles on Crete that were made by Constantinopolitan artists

Figure 27.2. Manuel and Ioannis Fokas, Dormition of the Virgin (nave), 1445.

in the fifteenth century confirm this rule: while their stylistic execution may be pristine and the application of contemporary Palaiologan artistic choices up to date compared to the regional masters' examples, the "Byzantine character" of the edifices is equally strong (Figure 27.2) (Lymberopoulou 2006: 185 and n. 136).

Of course, the fact that the Cretan frescoes preserved their Byzantine "identity" did not mean that they are entirely devoid of Western influences. A variety of Western iconographic elements found their way into religious cycles. Hence, Venetian glasses, indicative of the everyday social interaction, feature in table layouts in the scenes of the Last Supper and Herod's Feast in the church of the Panagia Kera at Kritsa, dated to the fourteenth century (Lymberopoulou 2007b). In two other fourteenth-century churches, Hagia Pelagia at Viannos, and Hagioi Apostoloi at Drys, Saint Bartholomew is depicted holding his flayed skin, which demonstrates knowledge of and a preference for the Western version of the saint's martyrdom, since according to the Orthodox Church he was crucified (Vassilakis-Mavrakakis 1982: 304, Figs 7, 8). And one of the most popular Catholic saints, Saint Francis, took his place among the Byzantine saints in four Cretan programs (Lymberopoulou 2006: 203 and n. 45).

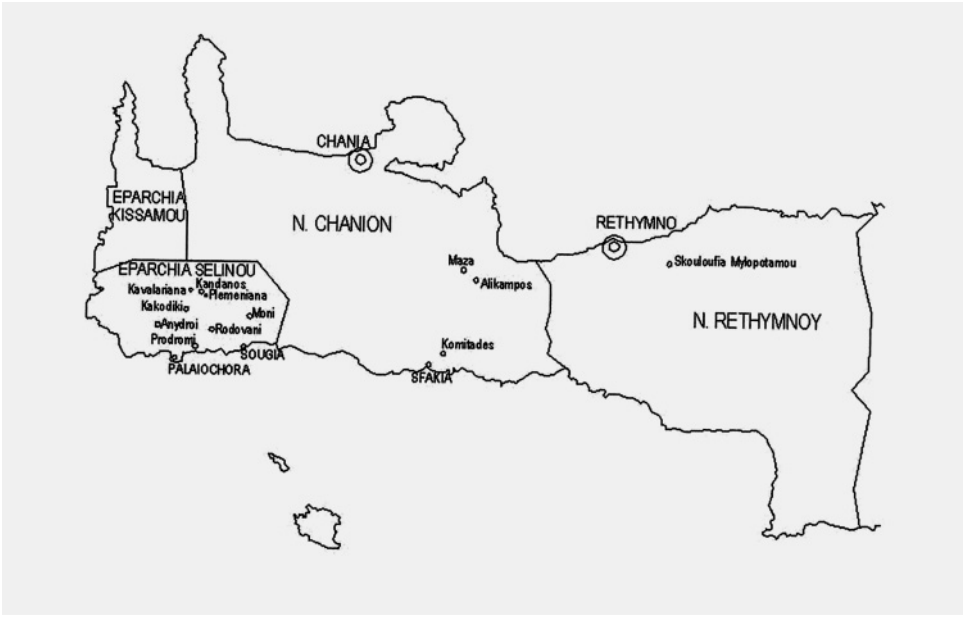
All these, and other similar examples, may point to a form of religious interaction that was not always born out of choice. The shortage of Latin priests forced many

province-based Catholics to attend Orthodox masses, a fact indirectly highlighted by repeated decrees issued by the Venetian authorities condemning this practice (Jacoby 1989: 205–6). The presence of a Western-type St Bartholomew or a St Francis may well be an indication that these churches were frequented by Catholics, who managed to have a small input on the otherwise purely Byzantine decoration. The point remains, however, that while the two cultures were obviously sharing and exchanging in the secular world, monumental church decoration remained literally and metaphorically immovable and faithful to a very long-standing and well-rooted tradition, a tradition that, even when it allowed new elements to penetrate its strict outlook, managed to adapt them to its standards: St Francis was certainly given a Byzantine "makeover" before joining his Orthodox peers (Borboudakis (nd.), Fig. 38).

In the literature on the Cretan frescoes, a lot of work has been done on distinguishing the hands of different masters and their schools. Other aspects of the production of this art form require greater attention, however. The province of Selino has not only the largest number of churches, but also of named artists; seven out of fifteen of the Cretan fresco painters whose names survive in inscriptions on their works were active here (Gerola, Lassithiotakis 1961: 113–16). A typical example from among their ranks was Ioannis Pagomenos, who painted at least three churches in the area. So far, the only source of information about Pagomenos and his activity is the fact that he left his signature in six of the monuments for the decoration of which he was responsible: Hagios Georgios, Komitades Sfakion, dated 1313–14; Hagios Nikolaos, Moni Selinou, Sougia, dated 1315; Koimesis of the Virgin, Alikampos Apokoronou, dated 1315–16; Hagios Georgios, Anydroi Selinou, dated 1323; Hagios Nikolaos, Maza Apokoronou, dated 1325–6; and Church of the Virgin, Beilitika, Kakodiki Selinou, dated 1331–2 (Map 27.3). Hence, we know that Pagomenos was active between 1313 and 1332, primarily in the prefecture of Chania. His place of birth, death, training, and residence remain unknown (Lymberopoulou 2006).

It is possible that Pagomenos was born and raised in the prefecture of Chania, where he was clearly favored. To assume, however, that he also received his training there, in the remote provinces of Crete, is much more difficult to support, especially when even the capital of the prefecture, Chania, was under-populated and underdeveloped at the time (Gasparis 2008: 79). It is more likely that Pagomenos was trained in Herakleion. Once a master, he probably also kept a residence in one of the main urban centers (possibly Chania). There he would have been able to stay during the winter period, when even the famously warm Cretan weather turns unfavorable for traveling and church decoration; he could have replenished his professional supplies between commissions, he could have raised a family, and his studio would have been steady point of reference for potential patrons.

The remoteness of the places where he worked makes it almost certain that he employed an assistant, partly to help him with the work *in situ* and partly to accompany him on the long and perilous journeys. Evidence from the contemporary Italian west suggests that fresco jobs of the kind Pagomenos undertook would not have demanded more than one skilled helper (Thomas 1995: 89; Lymberopoulou forth-



Map 27.3. Map with the churches signed by Ioannis Pagomenos.

coming a). A rather large number of churches, other than the six signed ones, have been associated with Pagomenos himself, his "workshop" and his "school," primarily on the basis of stylistic comparisons (Lymberopoulou forthcoming a). The complications of traveling and transporting painting materials to all these far-off places make it questionable that all these attributions are correct. Moreover, while there can be little doubt that Pagomenos's work exercised an influence on the next generation of painters working in the area, it is doubtful, whether one can speak about a school in the sense that he trained all his followers personally. It is useful to bear in mind that similar constraints would have applied to other Cretan painters who primarily received provincial commissions.

Stylistically, Pagomenos was not an exceptionally talented painter; but his ability was more than mediocre compared to other Cretan masters (Figures 27.3, 27.4). Analysis of his signed religious cycles reveals an orientation on the middle Byzantine period with glimpses of knowledge of the contemporary Palaiologan style. Other provincial fourteenth-century Cretan fresco painters operated within the same artistic parameters (Figures 27.5, 27.6). Urban redevelopment has deprived us of fresco cycles which would have allowed us to assess the talent and knowledge of contemporary Palaiologan art of artists working in the cities of Crete. Artists who came from Constantinople and worked in the island's provinces naturally were more up-to-date with the principles of Palaiologan art. Yet, while it is logical to assume that pictorial developments from the artistic center seeped through into the provinces only much

Figure 27.3. Ioannis Pagomenos, detail with Christ and Angels from the Ascension (sanctuary), 1313–14. Church of St. George at Komitades, Sfakia.

later, I am reluctant to use the term "provincial," with all its negative connotations, to describe the style of the Cretan frescoes; "regional" might be a better word (see also Holmes and Eastmond in this volume).

The fact that Byzantine fresco painting tended to be stylistically conservative in the locus of ritual is confirmed by the works of one of the most acclaimed sixteenth-century Cretan masters, Theophanes Strelitzas, also surnamed Bathas (Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou 1997: 381–397.). The painter made frescoes as well as icons, which testifies to the fact that a number of Cretan artists must have been trained in both media and makes the comparative study of the two even more necessary and justified. Theophanes was not only active on Crete, but was also called outside the borders of his island, showing how after the second fall of Constantinople, Crete itself had become an artistic hub around which the remainder of the post-Byzantine culture revolved. He decorated the monasteries in Meteora (Hagios Nikoloas Anapausas in 1527) and in Mount Athos (Lavra 1535–41 and Stavronikita 1545–6) in mainland Greece which was under Ottoman rule at the time before he eventually returned to Candia, where he died in 1559 (Chatzidakis 1969–70; Chatzidakis 1986; Chatzidakis

Figure 27.4. Ioannis Pagomenos, Saint George killing the dragon (scene from the cycle of Saint George in the nave), 1313–14. Church of St. George at Komitades, Sfakia.

1987: 82–4). These were establishments which attempted to uphold Greek identity, language and church rituals in a hostile environment. Even within the austere monastic environment of Mount Athos, however, Theophanes managed to introduce iconography influenced by Western prototypes: it has been established that his *Massacre of the Innocents* at Lavra is based on a print by the Italian artist Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael. Raimondi's engravings after Raphael's compositions appear to have been as popular on Crete as elsewhere in Europe during the sixteenth century (Chatzidakis 1969: 519; Chatzidakis 1986: 73–4; Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 1991: 272).

The rise of the Cretan icon is a field that demands further research. It may be connected to the pan-European phenomenon of the Renaissance. As in the rest of Europe, where the growing appreciation of art contributed to a rise in the status of the artist, the growing popularity of icons brought about a shift from the anonymous Byzantine craftsman to the "celebrity" painter. Angelos Akotantos, Andreas and Nikolaos Ritzos, Nikolaos Zafuris, Georgios Klontzas, Michael Damaskinos,

Figure 27.5. Unknown painter, Saint George led to prison (scene from the cycle of Saint George in the nave), 1319. Church of St. George at Cheliana, Mylopotamos.

Domenikos Theotokopoulos, Viktor, Emmanouel Tzanes, Emmanouel Lambardos, and Theodore Poulakis are, as it were, the Masaccio, Raphael, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Titian, Tintoretto, Caravaggio, and Carracci of post-Byzantine art.

Surviving examples of fourteenth-century Cretan icons are rare and generally of a traditional nature (Bouboudakis 1993). The more we progress into the fifteenth century, however, the more the scenario seems to change. Frescoes and icons were inversely related: while the number of the former diminished, that of the latter increased. Perhaps the demand for decorated churches in the provinces had largely been satisfied and painters tried to find other outlets for their talent. Perhaps also there was a process of urbanization, as a result of which the countryside became even more thinly populated. In any case, icon production was a growing industry which reached its peak around 1500.

At the beginning of this process stood an artist who rested in the Late Byzantine era with one leg while pushing open the door to the post-Byzantine age with the other. Perhaps the fact that he signed his works only with his first name—Angelos—is indicative of this duality: on the one hand he adhered to Byzantine anonymity; but on the other he embraced post-Byzantine personal fame. Modern scholarship has

Figure 27.6. Unknown painter, male saint (sanctuary), 1383. Church of St. John at Margarites, Mylopotamos.

managed to reveal the painter's full identity: his name was Angelos Akotantos, and just like the majority of the subsequent generations of Cretan icon painters, he lived and worked in Candia, the city which became the undisputed stronghold of icon production (Vassilaki 1997, 2009; Lymberopoulou 2007c). There he maintained a successful workshop, a family, and a comfortable life (Richardson, Woods, and Franklin 2007: 224–8). It has been suggested that his work shows the influence of the fifteenth-century Constantinopolitan fresco cycles found on the island and that he also painted frescoes himself on Patmos (Xyngopoulos 1957: 170; repeated in Vassilaki 1997: 186–8; Vassilaki 2009: 169–200), yet another indication that the relation between fresco and panel painting cannot be ignored.

Angelos introduced into fifteenth-century Byzantine icon painting new iconographic types, such as the *Winged Saint John the Baptist* (Fig. 27.7), developed initially for the templon decoration in Orthodox churches, and the Virgin *Kardiotissa*. These types demonstrate the capacity of Byzantine iconography to reinvent and renew itself within its own parameters. At the same time, while Angelos created innovative, pioneering art and explored new directions, he also defined a new tradition. His types

Figure 27.7. Angelos Akotantos, Winged Saint John the Baptist, first half of the fifteenth century.

became so well established that future generations of Cretan post-Byzantine icon painters, such as Michael Damaskinos in the sixteenth, and Viktor in the seventeenth, century, copied Angelos's works as part of the Byzantine heritage.

While the primary intention of icons was very similar to that of frescoes—to perform a specific religious function—their portability meant that they could be exposed to a wider range of interpretations. Even large-scale icons are, essentially, moveable objects: they can travel and, therefore, they can reach wider and more varied audiences. Not all icons were made for churches, either, a fact which possibly made the boundaries against foreign influences more permeable. It was perhaps the second fall of Constantinople in 1453 which gave an extra impetus to the already thriving cultural interaction on the island and brought about an art which mirrored existing Cretan social reality—the hybrid icon.

Probably the most famous example of a hybrid icon is the *Madre della Consolazione* (Figure 27.8). It was introduced in post-Byzantine Cretan painting by Nikolaos Zafuris, a talented artist active in the second half of the fifteenth century, whose

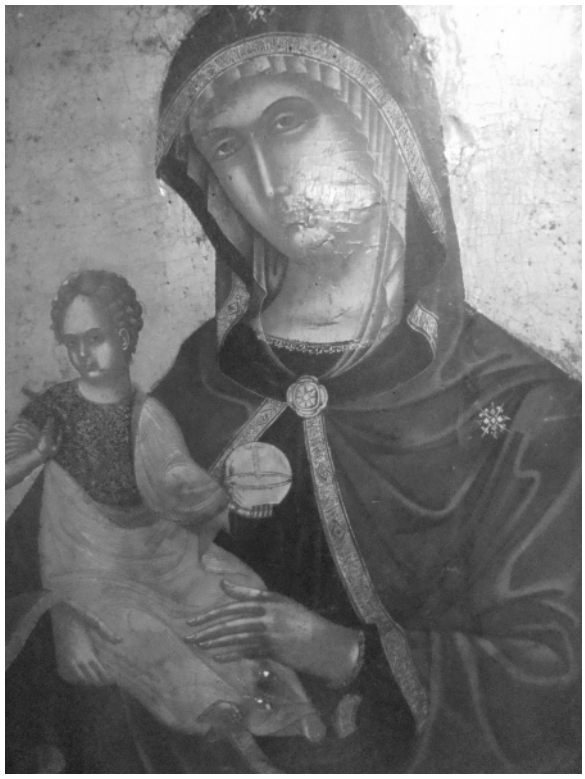


Figure 27.8. Attributed to Nikolaos Zafuris, *Madre della Consolazione*, late fifteenth century.

master may well have been the acclaimed Angelos (Lymberopoulou 2007c: 203–9). While the basic iconographic type is rooted in the famous Byzantine Virgin *Hodegetria*, it was named after a specific model in the homonymous church in Rome, a perfect reflection of its hybrid character. While the *Madre della Consolazione* maintains the aloofness of a typical Byzantine Virgin, she wears a transparent veil visible beneath her maphorion, a veil which never forms part of the Virgin's head cover in Byzantine art. The Child's attire also combines Byzantine elements—his diaphanous undergarment and his himation bathed in chrysography—with Western motifs such as the decorations on his shirt, which are inspired by fabrics depicted in paintings from the Italian Trecento. The numerous surviving examples of the type make it probably the most widely reproduced and disseminated hybrid icon. It appears to have been successful among both the Greek Orthodox and the Venetian Catholics on Crete, and even outside the island's borders. Existing documents testify to its export to Venice and northern Europe, informing us that fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe had a taste for icons (Lymberopoulou 2007a).

What made icons popular in Europe around this time? The Venetians, of course, were familiar with the primary use of icons as protectors and guards; during the first sack of Constantinople in 1204, they succeeded in bringing home the miraculous icon of the Virgin *Nikopoios* ("She who brings victory") and used it in exactly the same way that the Byzantines had done for centuries before them: in times of peril, the icon was carried around in procession (Ed. Vio 1999: 106, Fig. 79; Wood 2007: 219–20). Other Byzantine or Byzantine-inspired early Italian icons also acquired the status of miraculous images in the West (Ainsworth 2004). The Greeks who fled Constantinople in 1453 and came to Italy, carrying, among other things, their private icons, may also have been a contributing factor. Until recently, the accepted image of Italian Renaissance painting, based in no small part on Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, was one of a gradual and deliberate estrangement from its Byzantine ancestry (Richardson, Woods, and Franklin 2007: 376–8 (3.5.7); Lymberopoulou 2007a: 205–6; Wood 2007: 221). Not only has this view come to be revised, however, but it has also become clear that the tastes of Renaissance patrons may have encompassed a much wider range of possibilities than what was defined by Vasari and the later established canon of Italian art.

Perhaps the success of the icons lay exactly in the fact that they are not true to nature but rather that they strove to be true to spirit. Their purpose is to open a door to a world that knows no flesh, perspective, shadow, or foreshortening. They invite the faithful to concentrate, contemplate, focus, meditate, and pray, not to admire the colors, the composition, and the craftsmanship. Perhaps the Italian Renaissance made the divine too human and people had to turn elsewhere to fulfill their spiritual needs. The early-sixteenth-century German reformist Catholic Hieronymus Emser certainly openly advocated such a view, writing that:

> the more artfully images are made the more their viewers are lost in contemplation of the art and manner in which the figures have been worked. We should turn this contemplation from the images to the saints which they represent. Indeed, many are transfixed before the pictures and admire them so much that they never reflect on the saints. Therefore, it would be far better for us to follow the old custom and have simple pictures in the churches so that the expense would be spared and God and the saints would be venerated more than in this new manner which we now have. (eds Mangrum and Scavizzi 1991: 86)

It is possible the hybrid icon came to fill in the gap in art which was becoming increasingly human and focused on real life.

Whatever the reasons, by the second half of the fifteenth century Cretan painters enjoyed a reputation which motivated both Orthodox and Catholic patrons outside the island to seek their services. The Venetian ruler of Nauplio in the Peloponnese commissioned a *pala d'altare* from Zafuris (Richardson, Woods, and Franklin 2007: 231–4 (2.5.6). Theophanes Strelitzas and Michael Damaskinos were among the illustrious examples of the sixteenth century (Chatzidakis 1987: 241–54; Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 2000). Theophanes produced icons for his patrons in Mount Athos. Damaskinos was asked by the Greek confraternity in Venice to decorate its

church of *San Giorgio dei Greci*, St George of the Greeks, between 1574 and 1582 (Chatzidakis 1987: 241). In addition to the icons he painted for the tall templon, he also provided panel paintings for the sanctuary, a place within the Orthodox church traditionally decorated with frescoes. The substitution may have been because the Venetian climate does not favor the fresco technique. It may, however, also indicate that by the second half of the fifteenth century, fresco painting on the island was in steep decline, as is suggested by the diminishing numbers of surviving examples from this period on Crete. It is possible that Damaskinos, unlike Theophanes and Angelos before him, was not trained in this medium.

Theophanes' decision to become a monk at Mount Athos probably reflects his artistic interests and choices: while he obviously had knowledge of Western works, the majority of his surviving *oeuvre* is on the side of the Byzantine tradition. Damaskinos, however, presents a different story altogether. Like the majority of the successful Cretan artists of his time, he was able to paint both "a la maniera greca" and "a la maniera latina," Greek and Western alike. His surviving works range from the "pure" Byzantine style to the completely Italian. While in Venice, he was commissioned to paint the *Madonna del Rosario* for a Catholic church in Puglia, the Chiesa di S. Benedetto in Conservano. Inspired by Italian works, he introduced into post-Byzantine painting the *Stoning of Saint Stephen* (Figure 27.9) which betrays a familiarity with engravings deriving from Raphael's cartoon of the same subject, and the *Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*, adding a clear Byzantine touch in the form of angels at the top of both works (Campbell (ed.): 187–203; Vokotopoulos 1990: 51–3). One of his creations that exemplify his hybrid approach is his *Noli me Tangere* (Figure 27.10) with its Western-looking Mary Magdalen and its Byzantine Christ in the foreground, and a tapestry of motifs taken from various Western and Byzantine sources (Bouboudakis 1993: 457–8, no. 100; Lymberopoulou forthcoming b).

With the generation of Damaskinos, a greater degree of Western influences made its way into the Byzantine tradition than ever before. The baton was taken over by the Cretan icon painters from the seventeenth century, the last period of the Venetian domination of the island. Among the large number of surviving names from this era, that of Viktor the priest stands out, primarily because he created a unique symbol of the cross-cultural Cretan identity.

Modern scholarship tends to regard Viktor as a mediocre artist. Indeed, even one of his clients, Father Mpoumpoulis, the priest in the church of Saint George of the Greeks in Venice, complained about the quality of the work he received from him (Kazanaki-Lappa 1981: 190–91). Yet Viktor enjoyed a great reputation, as is evident from the fact that a Venice-based patron commissioned an icon of the Virgin from him in the first place. Furthermore, signed icons testify that he worked at the monastery of Filosofou Dimitsanas in the Peloponnese, the fresco decoration of which is also attributed to him (Chatzidakis 1987: 193), confirming once more the reputation of the Cretan artists outside the borders of their island, and also making it clear that a number of them continued to be trained in both media.

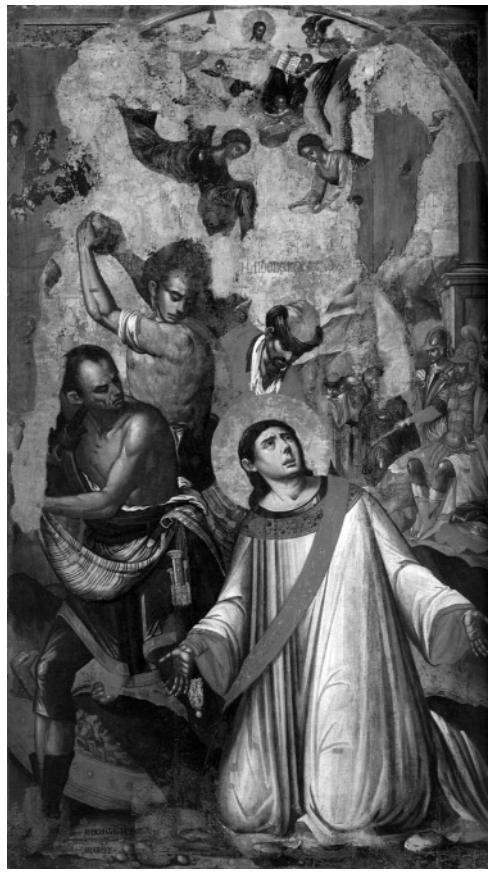


Figure 27.9. Michael Damaskinos, *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*, c.1590.

It has been suggested that Viktor's fame was connected to his copying from acclaimed masters of the past, mainly Angelos and Damaskinos. In fact, the Virgin commissioned by Father Mpoumpoulis was a Virgin *Kardiotissa*, the type introduced by Angelos in the fifteenth century. This hypothesis confirms that Cretan painters remained the almost exclusive point of reference for people or institutions outside the island whose primary concern was to obtain a "traditional" Byzantine work. Like Damaskinos and Theophanes before him, Viktor was chosen to produce a work for a priest from a Greek church in the heart of Venice at a time when, by the priest's own admission, there were so many other painters in the city he could have approached for the task. Nevertheless, it does not entirely solve the puzzle of Viktor's reputation, for there were other Cretan painters equally capable of producing traditional Byzantine icons.

Figure 27.10. Michael Damaskinos, *Noli me Tangere*. End of sixteenth century.

Viktor's fame landed him a commission from Francesco Morosini (1619–94). Morosini, who was to become the doge of Venice later in his life, between 1688 and 1694, held the rank of General Sea Captain during the final stages of the Cretan war against the Ottoman Turks, which eventually forced Venice to surrender her precious dominion in 1669. It was at this stage that Morosini asked Viktor to paint the banner for his flagship (Figure 27.11) (Vokotopoulos 1981). In the center is the Crucified Christ, with the coat of arms of the Morosini family underneath the cross. To the left, the lion of Saint Mark, the symbol of the Republic, embraces the foot of the Cross. Immediately above the lion, there is a depiction of the Virgin *Mesopantitissa*, a miraculous icon allegedly painted by Saint Luke that was brought to Crete from Constantinople during Iconoclasm. The cult of this icon, important to the Cretan Orthodox population, was adopted by the Venetians when they took possession of the island. The icon was placed in the cathedral of Saint Titos in Candia, where it remained until 1669, when it was transferred to Venice, to be placed in the church of *Santa Maria della Salute*, where it is still on display today. To the left of the

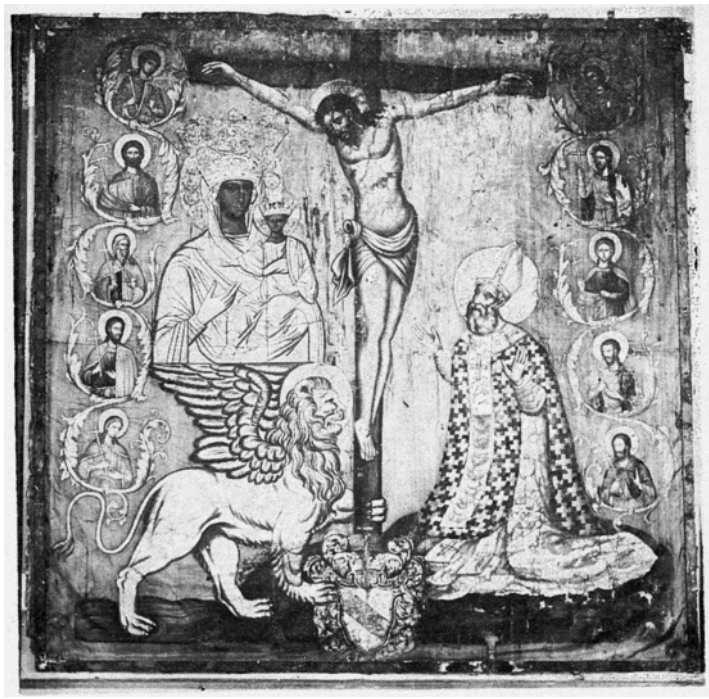


Figure 27.11. Viktor the priest, Morosini's banner, 1667.

Crucifixion in Morosini's banner, the kneeling Saint Titos is depicted, the patron saint of the island. Although he did not belong to the Venetian ecclesiastical calendar, Saint Titos, like the Virgin *Mesopantitissa*, was adopted by the Venetians and became the patron saint for both Greek and Venetian communities living on Crete. Ten medallions with busts of saints, five on each side, complete the iconography of the banner on the left and right. These saints have been identified with the Ten Saints, martyrs of the Christian faith during the reign of Decius (r.249–51). The saints were particularly venerated on the island, and their cult had reached its peak in the seventeenth century, when this banner was commissioned. Thus, Morosini's banner, created at the dying moments of the Venetian domination on Crete, is a unique reflection of the merger of two cultures that had taken place on the island during the preceding four-and-a-half centuries.

No discussion of Cretan post-Byzantine art is complete without mentioning Damaskinos' contemporary, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known under the nickname he acquired abroad, El Greco, the Greek. El Greco is undoubtedly the most famous artist from Crete. He was born in the capital, Candia, in 1541. Judging by one of his earliest surviving works, the *Dormition of the Virgin*, he was locally trained as an icon painter (Davies (ed.): 74–5, no. 1). At the age of 26 he moved to Venice, where he is generally thought to have studied with Titian (Constantoudaki 1975:

293, n. 3; Constantoudaki 1975–6: 56, n. 3). The master, however, was too old by the time the young Cretan arrived, so Titian's best student, Tintoretto, is a much more likely candidate to have assumed the role of El Greco's mentor. Stylistic comparisons between works of the two masters also point in this direction. El Greco subsequently went via Rome to Toledo, where he settled and worked until his death in 1614. The Greek signature he often used on his paintings, "Domenikos Theotokopoulos from Crete made this," suggests a measure of pride in his Cretan origin and perhaps in the artistic tradition in which he had been raised. His style, although radically westernized from the moment he came to Venice, retained recognizable elements of his original training till the very end. One of his last works, the *Visitation*, is in fact reminiscent of icon painting in the ambiguity of the spatial construction of the scene and in the use of light (Davies 2003: 206–7, no. 58). Yet had we not known with certainty the identity of its creator, it is doubtful that any scholar would have attributed it to the same hand as the early *Dormition of the Virgin*.

El Greco's formation as an artist reflects the hybrid Cretan society in that perhaps nowhere else could a painter from one artistic background have crossed over and become a successful master in another, entirely different one. It is of course questionable that his development would have been the same if he had chosen to move back to Candia like Damaskinos or had stayed on in Venice, an equally appealing option for Cretan painters. On Crete certainly he might not have found an audience for his more radical experiments in the delicate balance of the two co-existing cultures. On the other hand, the fact that El Greco's art was not fully understood in his time and his fame ended practically at his death may have its base in the hybrid combination of two different cultures and artistic traditions that was prevalent on Crete, and of which he was possibly the most extreme manifestation. He was rediscovered only two centuries later when Western art was moving in new directions and attempting to incorporate art forms that were foreign to it, with Picasso, one primary exponent of this development, and one of the "icons" of twentieth-century modernism in his own right, leading the way in the older master's "resurrection" (*Pablo Picasso* 1989: 22).

This seems a fitting conclusion to what is by necessity a selective outline of the complicated history of art on Venetian-dominated Crete. We have seen how the closer art was produced to the liturgical core of Byzantine Orthodoxy, the more likely it was that patrons and artists sought to maintain a "pure" Byzantine style and iconography, even after the final fall of Constantinople, as can be seen in ecclesiastical fresco decorations, but also in icons made for churches. Icons for private households, on the other hand, were further removed from the Orthodox Church's sphere of influence and show a greater degree of integration of Byzantine and Western elements, culminating in the "hybrid" icons of the later fifteenth century.

To begin with, the fifteenth-century hybrid icon was the product of a social reality which knew how to mix different elements without making them unrecognizable or allowing them to lose their identity. As time progressed, Cretan "bilingual" painters became more daring. After 1453, Western influences became undoubtedly overwhelming for the painter who was interested to learn and to experiment. Trips to the artistic capital of Venice were attractive and relatively easy to make. At the same

time, there may have been some reassurance in the fact that the maintenance of the purely Byzantine visual heritage could also be guaranteed, often by the same masters who also sought to experiment. As the pull of the two different traditions intensified, it took an artist of the calibre of El Greco to forge their components into something radically new.

FURTHER READING

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Italian scholar, Giuseppe Gerola, traveled on the island and cataloged, among other things, the majority of the 845 Orthodox Cretan churches still extant in his monumental four-volume publication (Gerola 1905–17 and Gerola 1932; Gerola and Lassithiotakis 1961). A large number of studies followed Gerola's, both general surveys on the churches of the island (these include Bissinger 1995; Borboudakis, Gallas, and Wessel 1983; Chatzidakis 1952; Kalokyris 1973; Lassithiotakis 1969a and b, 1970a and b, 1971; Psilakis 1992–3 and 1994; Spatharakis 1999 and 2001) and monographs addressing specific problems and questions related to either one or a group of churches (such as Lymberopoulou 2006; Maderakis 2008a and b; Sucrow 1994; Tsamakda 2007, 2008).

While Gerola can be hailed as the "father" of scholarship for Cretan frescoes, for Cretan icons this position is held by Manolis Chatzidakis, whose seminal publications generated an interest in, and fostered further research on, the topic (for example, Chatzidakis 1974a and b; Chatzidakis 1977). Unlike the artistic traditions from the Early, Middle and even Late Byzantine periods, post-Byzantine icon painting offers an abundance of named artists and signed works as well as extensive, surviving documentation—after all, this is the "Greek Renaissance" (*Post-Byzantium: The Greek Renaissance*, 2002). These conditions make it a very popular subject of study, particularly in Greece. Numerous collection and exhibition catalogs, as well as articles in journals and conference volumes, have been devoted to Cretan icons by a wide range of scholars, including Nano Chatzidakis 1983, 1993, 1998; Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 1986, 2002; Cormack 1997; Drandaki 2002; Lymberopoulou 2003a and b, 2007d; Vassilaki 2009; and Vokotopoulos 1990.

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